

gay COMMUNITY NEWS

JANUARY 17-23, 1988

VOLUME 15

NO. 26

BIPAD: 65498

\$1.00

FOR FIFTEEN YEARS, THE LESBIAN AND GAY WEEKLY

Supremes deny Georgetown stay

*University undermines its own defense
by changing position on compliance with
D.C. gay rights law, and queers who
attended during the eight year litigation may
each get \$400*

By Denise Sudell

WASHINGTON, DC — The Supreme Court this week unanimously issued an order denying Georgetown University interim relief from an appeals court decision which requires the university to grant "tangible benefits" to lesbian and gay student groups.

The brief order did not determine whether the decision issued Nov. 20 by the District of Columbia Court of Appeals (see *GCN* Vol. 15, No. 21) was correct; it simply rejected the university's request for a stay of the decision.

Georgetown had asked the Supreme Court to grant a stay at least until the university had asked the High Court to review the decision. The school claimed that because the Roman Catholic Church considers homosexuality sinful, the school cannot comply with the decision, even on an interim basis, without "violating its conscience" as a Roman Catholic institution.

Chief Justice William H. Rehnquist last month granted the university a temporary stay of the appeals court's decision. However, the chief justice referred the request to the full Court for further consideration. By a 7 to 0 vote, the Court lifted the stay granted by Rehnquist. (Justice Antonin Scalia, a Georgetown graduate, did not vote.)

The November decision by the D.C. Court of Appeals held that the D.C. government's interest in outlawing discrimination outweighed Georgetown's First Amend-

ment rights to exercise its religious beliefs. The appeals court held that Georgetown had violated the D.C. Human Rights Act by refusing to provide lesbian and gay student groups with the same "tangible benefits" as other, officially recognized student groups.

Nobody stood up for them

The university has until Feb. 18 to petition the Supreme Court to review the appeals court's decision. However, even if the school files such a petition, the Supreme Court is not required to accept the case for review. Richard Gross, attorney for the lesbian and gay student groups, thinks that the Supreme Court's order indicates it will refuse to hear the case.

"If this were a case they (the justices) were anxious to hear, they'd be more likely to stay the results," Gross told *GCN*. "I'm surprised that considering the number of Catholics on the Court (four), and the number of conservatives, nobody stood up for them (Georgetown). ...I think it's most significant that they didn't get any votes."

The ruling clears the way for the D.C. Superior Court, which originally tried the case, to issue an order outlining the steps Georgetown must take to comply with the appeals court's decision. Gross filed a proposed order with Superior Court Judge Sylvia Bacon in December, asking her to order "full and immediate compliance."

Georgetown has argued that the appeals court's decision requires the university to grant only limited benefits, such as mailing services and copying privileges to the student groups. The groups contend that the decision requires Georgetown to grant them all benefits provided to other groups. According to David Turner, co-chairperson of the Lesbian and Gay Association (LAGA), the group at Georgetown's law school, a major sticking point has been whether the university must grant the group funding.

Gross confirmed reports that he met this week with attorneys for the university to discuss the compliance issue, but declined to comment on the meeting's outcome.

Gross did acknowledge that the students will ask that Georgetown be required to pay \$400 each to the hundreds of lesbian and gay students who have attended the university during the 8-year course of the lawsuit. The D.C. Human Rights Act permits such payments, rather than forcing those discriminated against to prove the dollar value of the discrimination they suffered. "We'd have a tough time proving actual damages," said Gross.

How will the court and the student groups, LAGA and Gay People of Georgetown University (GPGU), identify

Continued on page 3



Southern victory for gay rights

After public hearings on anti-gay violence and an election that swept many progressives into office, the Raleigh, N.C. City Council extends anti-discrimination protection to lesbians and gay men

By Barry Yeoman

RALEIGH, NC — Jesse Helms' hometown has become one of a handful of Southern cities to officially oppose discrimination against lesbians and gay men.

By a 7-1 vote, the Raleigh City Council amended its anti-discrimination policy on Jan. 5 to include "sexual orientation." Of the 50 or so cities with gay rights laws, only a few others — including Chapel Hill, N.C., and Atlanta — are located in the South.

The new law covers city employment and city-funded housing. In addition, all companies doing business with the city must sign a statement agreeing not to discriminate against lesbians and gay men. Agencies receiving city funding must sign a similar agreement.

"People just sensed that this was overdue," said newly-elected council member Anne Franklin. "There really wasn't much debate about the principle."

The new gay rights law comes after more than a year of organizing on the part of the gay community — culminating in an election last fall that swept a progressive majority into office.

Anti-gay violence

In August 1986, June Norris, pastor of St. John's Metropolitan Community Church, went into her office. She flipped on the answering machine and heard this message: "I'm gonna kill all you fags...because I hate you fags...I'm gonna kill all you goddamn queers."

No violence ensued from that call, but it sparked a chain of events leading to a hearing on anti-gay violence and discrimination last summer. The hearing was sponsored by the city's Human Resources Advisory Council; several council members attended.

At the hearing, lesbians and gay men talked about beatings, rapes, firings and harassment they had endured because of their sexual orientation. Several speakers testified on videotape, hiding their faces; most testified in person, giving their full names and addresses. Television cameras rolled.

Jim Baxter, editor of *The Front Page*, a gay newspaper in Raleigh, related his experience when two men forced their way into his apartment one night, then brutally assaulted him when they found gay publications littering his floor. Gay activist Willic Pilkington testified about being shot by a man who later claimed he was "defending himself against a queer." He also talked about city employees who reportedly referred to gays as "faggots, queers [and] sons of bitches."

Several witnesses testified about the insensitivity of Raleigh's police officers to gay crime victims. Gay bar manager Warren Kilby told the committee about being stabbed with a pair of scissors by a man with whom he had had sex. After reporting the incident to the police, "the detective [told me] that I could go to jail [because of the state's sodomy laws] and the man who tried to kill me could very well go free. He made me feel like I was as guilty as this madman who assaulted me."

The hearing resulted in a report by the advisory committee, which concluded that anti-gay violence and discrimination plagued North Carolina's capital city. The report recommended a series of corrective steps, including a law guaranteeing the rights of all gay citizens.

The successful public hearing gave a boost to Raleigh's gay community, which then turned its attention to the upcoming

Continued on page 12



Attorney Richard Gross

Quote of the week

“The Women’s center is presenting a film entitled: *Alternative Conceptions*. You know, so all those lesbians who want to have children but can’t stand to get within ten feet of a man can conceive a child and then, perhaps, have a child aborted in a compassionate and supportive atmosphere of other womyn feminists.”

— from the Campus Review, an “independent, nonpartisan journal,” printed at the University of Iowa. Another tidbit found in the November 1987 edition of the paper include an article titled “AIDS and the College Student” by Gary Bauer, assistant to Ronald Reagan:

“In fact, on many campuses students are suprised to find that no one is willing to assert and defend the moral and religious norms they learned from their families and churches. Even though homosexual behavior, if embraced by a sizeable proportion of the population, would result in a dying civilization in a generation or so, it is taboo to describe this behavior as socially undesirable, unnatural or deviant. As a result, students are denied the best medical advice available, which is to avoid dangerous sexual activities associated primarily, but not exclusively, with the gay community.” □

Minnesota to study hate crimes

ST. PAUL, MN — Documenting specific incidents of harassment and violence against minorities, including gay men and lesbians, is the purpose of eight hearings to be held throughout the state in January. The Governor’s Task Force on Prejudice and Violence is organizing the hearings, which will also investigate harassment of Black, Native American, Jewish, Latino, Southeast Asian, and disabled people.

Equal Time reports that the task force is an outgrowth of an unsuccessful effort to enact an anti-terrorism law in 1983. The law would have upgraded terrorist acts from a misdemeanor to a felony, and listed gay men and lesbians as one of several protected groups. Opponents argued that there was no documented evidence that special protection was needed.

“We continue to believe in the importance of getting legislation on the books,” said Leo Treadway, a task force member. “Almost all of us know of hassling, someone getting beat up. Very few people would not see this as an issue we live with daily.”

The task force is charged with reporting to the legislature in February and making legislative suggestions.

□ Lori Kenschaft

S/M dykes to make contact

BERKELEY, CA — A new woman’s contact organization has formed for lesbians interested in s/m. Called Womanlink, the group developed with the help of members of Interchain, a similar personal networking organization for leathermen. Womanlink offers s/m women a means of corresponding with or meeting with other s/m women. For further information or an application, send an SASE to Womanlink, 2124 Kitteredge, No. 257, Berkeley, CA, 94704.

□ Elizabeth Pincus

New York gay Catholics get militant

NEW YORK — Eleven gay Catholics were arrested last month when they stood in protest during the priest’s homily in Saint Patrick’s Cathedral and then refused to either sit or leave the church. Similar protests have been held at the Cathedral once a month since the Archdiocese ordered the end to special masses for Dignity, a gay Catholic organization, last March.

This time, however, some protesters announced beforehand their intent to remain standing even after the ushers asked them to “conform to the normal Catholic form of worship.” They were promptly arrested.

According to the New York Times, the eleven arrests include a priest and a person with AIDS.

The local chapter of Dignity had been meeting weekly since 1979 in the St. Francis Xavier Church before they were forbidden to use its facilities. Similar expulsions have occurred around the country since a Vatican document that called homosexuality an “intrinsic moral disorder.”

“He never stopped speaking,” said Dignity official Robert Pusilo of the presiding priest. “We heard all those catch words like ‘love’ and ‘community.’ It’s devastating to people to know those are just hollow words. There is no loving going on toward the gay and lesbian community.”

□ Lori Kenschaft

U.S. Bishops ok condom ed

WASHINGTON, DC — In its first major statement on AIDS, the United States Catholic Conference has endorsed instruction about condoms in educational programs intended to halt the spread of AIDS.

The bishops emphasized that their statement did not in any way represent an acceptance of either homosexuality or contraception. “Human sexuality is essentially related to permanent commitment in love and openness to new life,” they wrote. “[It] is to be genitally expressed only in a monogamous, heterosexual relationship of lasting fidelity in marriage.”

According to the New York Times, the bishop’s paper calls on Catholic schools — from elementary schools to colleges and seminaries — to develop materials to teach about AIDS prevention.

The paper attracted criticism from more conservative Catholics. New York Archbishop John Cardinal O’Connor promptly characterized the paper as a “very grave mistake” and forbade instruction about condoms in the Archdiocese’s AIDS education programs in schools, hospitals, and youth programs.

“I think what will happen is that all over the United States you will find bishops issuing statements similar to mine,” O’Connor said.

□ Lori Kenschaft

HIV-positive prostitute charged with attempted manslaughter

ORLANDO, FL — A judge set bail at \$204,000 for Elizabeth Kay Sherouse after her arrest on two charges of attempted manslaughter for practicing prostitution with knowledge that she is infected with HIV.

“We are talking about hundreds of victims, there’s no doubt,” said sheriff’s spokesperson Randy Means, who described Sherouse as a “very active” prostitute who may have had sex with up to five men a night, seven nights a week. According to the Montrose Voice, the charges include only two counts of attempted manslaughter because only two of her clients are willing to cooperate with her prosecution. Both men said they used condoms.


People arrested on prostitution charges are tested three times before they are labeled as carriers.

Sherouse was notified last year of her antibody status and was again arrested for prostitution in July and August. A warrant for her arrest was issued in October, after investigators and state prosecutors researched the legal basis for bringing such charges against an HIV-infected prostitute.

□ Lori Kenschaft

NEWSNOTES
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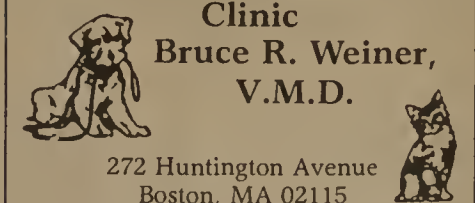
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REAL PAPER AWARDS
J & S Automotive
BEST AUTO MECHANIC

It looks like a big commercial garage, but there are these weird little things about it. Reggae music is blasting away, signs for political and union meetings are taped up, the mechanic might be a woman, and sometimes it’s hard to find anyone in charge. J & S has been Boston’s hippest garage for years and years, and for the last few years, it’s also been the best. Even when they didn’t know how to fix everything, they never cheated anybody or covered up. So over the years they kept learning new makes and new techniques, and now can repair about anything. Plymouth Valiants, those classics of dependability. But they’re ready for anything and did most of the work on the antique vehicles for the movie “The Brinks Job.”

Reprinted from Real Paper, “Best of Boston,” Fall 1980.

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Boston considers needle-exchange program

City officials support AIDS prevention measure targeted for IV drug users, but Gov. Dukakis slams plan

By Elizabeth Pincus

BOSTON — In an effort to curb the spread of AIDS among IV drug users, city health officials are considering the implementation of a needle-exchange program. Modeled after two projects currently underway in Europe, the proposed Boston program would allow old needles and syringes to be traded for unused ones. George Lamb, the city's deputy commissioner of Health and Hospitals, traveled on Jan. 9 to Liverpool, England and Amsterdam, Holland to investigate existing programs. Lamb's fact-finding trip was endorsed by Mayor Raymond Flynn who suggested last summer that Boston begin a needle-exchange program on an experimental basis.

Early reports from Lamb indicate he is impressed that the European programs succeed at both discouraging the use of dirty needles and supporting the option of drug treatment. "I see needle exchange as part of a total approach to AIDS prevention among drug users," Lamb told the Boston *Globe*. He expressed support for education about safer injection techniques, and more programs for residential drug rehabilitation treatment and methadone maintenance.

Exposure to contaminated blood through IV drug use currently accounts for about one-quarter of the AIDS cases in the United States, according to the Centers for Disease Control. In Boston, Lamb estimated that 20 to 25 percent of IV drug users are infected with HIV, the virus widely thought to cause AIDS. He urged adoption of a clean-needle program to prevent a situation similar to New York's where he said an estimated 50 to 60 percent of IV drug users have been infected. Other proponents of needle-exchange efforts point out that programs are needed to assist the Black and Latino communities, since they are disproportionately affected by the spread of AIDS among IV drug users. Lamb stressed the need for ongoing education about AIDS prevention to accompany clean-needle programs, particularly since reports increasingly reveal a shortage of spaces in city detoxification programs for drug users seeking treatment.

According to David Mulligan, director of the state's Substance Abuse Services, since 1985 there has been a 100 percent increase in requests by IV drug users for rehabilitative services in Massachusetts. However, he said, the number of available slots in state facilities has increased by only 27 percent. Though attempts are underway to educate IV drug users about clean needles and condoms, many human service providers mention difficulties in organizing drug users since they generally remain an oppressed and stigmatized group.

Nancy Grantham, director of Boston's Gay and Lesbian Counseling Services, explained that IV drug users are in a situation comparable to that experienced by gay men about five years ago. "There's a feeling of,

'Oh, my god, what's happening to us?'" Grantham said. "Gay people responded by organizing and supporting each other. Today we feel we have a pretty good handle on what kinds of behaviors keep the virus under control in the gay community. But the IV drug user population is more problematic."

While Lamb was investigating needle-exchange measures in Europe, Massachusetts Public Health Commissioner Deborah Prothrow-Stith said that although she would not block efforts to begin such a program, she advocated pushing IV drug users to seek rehabilitation instead. Meanwhile, Gov. Michael Dukakis stated he is absolutely opposed to providing sterile needles to IV drug users, even if data emerge suggesting that such measures can deter AIDS transmission. Dukakis made the announcement at a community health center in Roxbury after explaining his plan to add \$2.65 million to next year's state budget to combat AIDS among drug users. The amount will be bolstered, Dukakis noted, by \$2.4 million in federal funds targeted for drug treatment programs in Massachusetts.

Larry Kessler, executive director of Boston's AIDS Action Committee, reportedly "hit the ceiling" when he heard Dukakis' remarks. Kessler, who was unavailable for comment to *GCN*, told the Boston *Globe* that though an additional \$2.65 million was welcome, at least \$40 million would be needed to handle programs for IV drug users. "This is a global emergency," Kessler said. "I can't stress that enough. We can't treat this as business as usual."

Kessler urged the adoption of sterile-needle programs immediately. "I think we have to do it all," he said. "Teach people to clean their needles, teach them to use bleach [to kill the AIDS virus] and motivate them to get into treatment and make sure the treatment slots are there."

The details of the proposed needle-exchange program for Boston are not yet confirmed. The legal feasibility of the plan is also unclear, since Massachusetts remains one of eleven states where possession of syringes for non-medical purposes is outlawed. However, Lamb said that perhaps the law could be circumvented by urging doctors to prescribe clean needles and syringes as an AIDS prevention measure.

Others argue for legalizing the sale and possession of needles. In New York, for example, where clean-needle programs have also come to the forefront in discussions about AIDS prevention, State Assembly member Richard Gottfried (D-Manhattan) last week proposed legislation to allow needle use without prescription. This move followed an announcement by the Association for Drug Abuse Prevention and Treatment (ADAPT), a private drug counseling

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Georgetown

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who will be entitled to such damages? "We might solicit alumni, asking them if they were eligible for membership in the groups, wanted to join, but felt they couldn't" because of the university's position, Gross said. Other methods are also being considered. Gross added that the names of any persons who step forward will be kept confidential.

The student groups will also request that Georgetown be required to pay the groups' attorney's fees, estimated at over half a million dollars.

They made a bad mistake

Ironically, Georgetown's financial concerns may have undermined its "supporting sinful activity" argument and contributed to its loss this week.

The university has in the past benefited from tax-exempt bonds issued by the District of Columbia. However, in order to qualify for such funds, the university was required to obtain from the D.C. Human Rights Office a certification of compliance with the District's Human Rights Act. Because

of the school's discrimination against the lesbian and gay groups, the office has in recent years refused to issue such a certification.

After the appeals court's decision was issued in November, Georgetown's president, Father Timothy Healy, announced that the university would comply with the decision, and asked the district to issue \$196 million in bonds for the school. However, the tax law, which enabled the district government to issue the bond, expired at the end of 1987, and the government informed Healy that it could not issue the bonds in time. The university's executive committee thereupon voted to refuse to comply with the decision and to seek the stay. "They made a bad mistake, definitely," Gross told *GCN*. The school "argued quite strongly" to the Supreme Court that its right to religious freedom would be "trampled on" if it was forced to comply with the decision. But by first announcing that it would comply, the school undercut its own argument. "It's one thing to be consistent and say you're being trampled on," Gross said. "It's another thing to be inconsistent and say you're being trampled on when you don't get your money." □

Lesbian sues Cambridge cops for misconduct

Cambridge woman who sought detox claims she was permanently injured by police, while the city's watchdog group in charge of investigating abuse has failed to act on the case

By Elizabeth Pincus

CAMBRIDGE, MA — A young lesbian who claims she was physically injured by police officers during an incident last winter has filed suit against the officers and the city of Cambridge. Carey Chaplic, 22, charges that eight officers and two matrons from the Cambridge Police Department caused her to suffer second and third degree burns on her hand and forearm, then deliberately failed to provide medical treatment. The lawsuit was instigated by Chaplic and her youth advocate Molly Baldwin after the Police Civilian Review and Advisory Board in Cambridge, failed to properly investigate, according to Baldwin.

The alleged misconduct occurred the evening of Jan. 19, 1987 when Chaplic says she summoned the police for assistance in getting to an alcohol detoxification center. Instead of receiving help, Chaplic claims she was handcuffed, taken into custody at Cambridge Police Headquarters and abused. (Under a Massachusetts protective custody statute, cops are obligated to assist individuals who seek help when intoxicated. The police may only forcibly detain someone if they present a danger to themselves or others, or if space is unavailable in all city detox centers.)

Baldwin, a counselor who worked with Chaplic at a youth employment program, explained that Chaplic stands about 5' 2" and would not present a physical danger to police. "It's outrageous and inexcusable," Baldwin said. "Carey's not big or crazy — there was no reason to forcibly restrain her. Cops have a lot of power that should not be used to abuse and hurt people. We need to pressure public institutions to be accountable for their behavior."

Chaplic's attorney Ellen K. Wade also expressed indignation at how her client was

treated. Wade explained that in addition to receiving permanent burn scars as a result of the episode, Chaplic reported being verbally harassed and ridiculed by the police. Wade speculated that "the police undoubtedly perceived Carey as acting and looking like a lesbian, and this may account for some of her treatment."

The lawsuit filed by Wade involves both charges against individual officers and a civil rights complaint against the city of Cambridge for violating Chaplic's federal and state constitutional rights. A Suffolk County Superior Court trial date has not yet been set. The individuals charged in the suit are police officers Lloyd Lewis, Austin Maxwell, Walter Brutley, John Sheehan, Thomas Benson, John Doe, Michael Moe and Richard Roe (some of whose true names are presently unknown because Chaplic was unable to identify them) and Police Department matrons Kay Morin and Susan Harris.

"The city may deny everything of consequence," Wade said, "but there's a strong support network for Carey — Molly Baldwin is really committed. We filed the suit after they both put a lot of energy and cooperation into working with the [Cambridge Police Civilian Review and Advisory Board]. But nothing has happened. It was important to Carey, but the city agency hasn't come through."

Wade, along with Baldwin and Chaplic, also sent a letter describing the whole incident to the Cambridge City Manager, Robert Healy. Though Healy was unavailable for comment, Cambridge City Solicitor Russell Higley told *GCN* the city plans to defend the case. "Based on our initial investigation," Higley said, "and a physical review of the premises, it would ap-

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Foster care to get Mass. high court review

The Supreme Judicial Court will decide whether the Dukakis administration can withhold key policy documents pertaining to the state's anti-gay foster care practices

By Chris Bull

BOSTON — The Supreme Judicial Court (SJC) last week cleared the way for gay foster parent Donald Babets' suit against the Dukakis administration to proceed. The SJC granted Babets "direct appellate review" of the state's claimed executive privilege, invoked by the Department of Human Services (DHS) to block access to 35 documents used to develop its anti-gay foster care policy.

Babets v. Dukakis was brought in May 1985 when the DHS stripped custody of two foster children from Babets and his lover, David Jean. The DHS cited preference for "traditional" foster families in the foster placement decision making process. The issue had dogged Dukakis in his campaign for the Democratic presidential nomination and has rallied the Massachusetts lesbian and gay community against the governor.

Tony Doniger, an attorney representing Babets, said the decision "speeds up" Babets' case by denying the administration's claim. Access to the the documents may shed light on the DHS's alleged "intent to discriminate," Babets told *GCN*. Doniger said he expects the SJC to review the documents in question and decide on their admissibility as evidence in the case by sometime this summer.

Doniger told *GCN* the government has withheld documents, "I suspect are important to the case. Otherwise they would not be withholding them." According to the state, executive privilege is necessary to insure that policy makers are not intimidated by the threat of lawsuits in voicing their views on policy. Kevin Cathcart, executive director of Gay and Lesbian Advocates and Defenders, said this is the first time the state



Gay foster parent Donald Babets

has ever invoked executive privilege in a case.

Babets said, "We will ultimately prevail because the issue has become even more important than gay and lesbian rights. It now involves government secrecy and democracy. The state is clearly resorting to a Nixonian tactic."

Cathcart added that the SJC decision was an "embarrassment" to Dukakis in the midst of a presidential campaign. He said the issue of executive privilege has broad implications that could affect a vast amount of litigation relating to state action. "It would make it very difficult for plaintiffs to get in to the thinking behind the policy," said Cathcart. □

GCN welcomes all letters to the editor except personal attacks. Carbon copies of letters sent elsewhere are printed on a space-available basis. The opinions expressed here are those of the author and are not intended to represent the views of the GCN membership. Letters must be TYPED, DOUBLE-SPACED AND NO LONGER THAN THREE PAGES. Send to: Community Voices, GCN, 62 Berkeley St., Boston, MA 02116.

On "warnings" against prisoners

Dear GCN:

A reader suggested last week that the Prisoner Project penpal space should be "prefaced" with a "disclaimer" warning gay people (as if we didn't know, already) that we are "ideal targets for everything from blackmail to murder." The writer did not point out that obviously by far most of the anti-gay bigotry and violence that we suffer comes from people who never have and never will be in prison. Perhaps we should preface all advertisements, articles about politicians, etc. with these "disclaimers."

The writer also suggested that the funds currently being "channeled into the prisoner project" would best be spent "enduring the AIDS epidemic." Besides the fact that the paper uses the prisoner project to support its 501(c)3 'educational charity' (as opposed to simple 'business') tax status, the regular donations of some of our readers specifically aimed at the prisoner project are what pay for its material needs (free subs). We leave it to our readers to decide for themselves if they want to donate these funds to other causes. We also point out that there are many people with AIDS in prison and they are receiving, as you may well imagine, practically no attention from the various AIDS support groups. Perhaps the nameless letter writer would like to help out with our Prisoners with AIDS project.

At GCN we pretty regularly get notes & calls from people (outside) involved in penpal, coming-out-support, and other relationships with gay & lesbian prisoners. These are not always meant for publication, but perhaps it would be useful for some of you who have found some value in this project to let others hear about your experience.

Mike Riegle
Prisoner Project
Boston, MA

PWARC on "solo-status"

Dear GCN:

I am currently a prisoner pending trial. Unfortunately I have been diagnosed as a person with AIDS Related Complex (PWARC).

I am currently in what they call here "solo-status". I cannot tell you how lonely and horrible it is to be in a cell a little wider than most people's bathrooms, locked down 24 hours a day with minimal recreation and contact with other human beings.

Since I have been here, which is my first time in a prison, I have been attacked without provocation by other inmates twice already. I had to receive medical attention as a result of both attacks. In one attack I was actually hand-cuffed from behind and, unable to defend myself, while I was in the custody of guards being taken to the shower, and the guards just stood by and watched!

There are a lot of homophobic inmates here who feel that just because a person is Gay, they are AIDS carriers, or as some say "AIDS spreaders." I feel as a result of my medical confidentiality being compromised here by the guards who have access to inmates' medical files, I am being ostracized and victimized.

People just don't understand that just because a person is Gay that they are still human beings with feelings and have a right to breathe and live. At times I feel as though people here think I am Radio-Active or something.

While I was in here I met someone who showed me a copy of GCN and I finally realized that there are other people like myself in the same circumstances, so to speak. I think GCN is certainly informative and extremely enlightening.

It seems the only mail I'm receiving is from my mother (Bless her). I'm able to receive letters from people outside prison

and would certainly be "thrilled to life" to have a penpal or two. I have all day and night to answer letters. Please don't send money, but I do need some understanding. I would feel a lot less isolated.

Thank you,
James (Jimmy) Magner
38670-019 Alpha-B
902 Renfroe Rd
Talladega, AL 35160

Good gay/bad gay

Dear GCN:

Many thanks and congrats to Charley Shively for his comprehensive review of recent AIDS-related works. A special appreciation for the observations on Randy Shilts' [author of *And the Band Played On: Politics, People and the AIDS Epidemic*] careful construction of "good gay/bad gay" sexual politics and transmission of whatever-the-hell-it-is that causes AIDS. Most particularly, I was gratified to see Shilts' blame-the-buttfuckers-and-tub-queens theory identified for what it is: fear and loathing of sex, homosex, and gay men, and a shameless pandering to the homophobia of the straight media. Yuck.

Sue Hyde
Washington, DC

Coors truce equals surrender

Dear GCN:

It was surprising, unfortunate, and disheartening to read that Boston City Councillor David Scondras has unilaterally ended the lesbian and gay community's "official" boycott of Coors beer on the East Coast (GCN, Dec. 20, 1987).

While it is true labor has ended, officially, its boycott of Coors, progressive elements in the labor movement are maintaining the boycott because Coors remains a non-union corporation whose principal officers fund, very generously, right-wing organizations which foster reactionary programs and policies in this country and abroad.

Can anyone honestly state that Coors has fundamentally changed? Not if one wants to retain credibility! The boycott has caused Coors to promote a moderate public relations image, targetting various groups and organizations alienated by Coors' documented practices of discrimination and its funding of the right-wing; nevertheless, nothing of substance has been won by the backers of the boycott, including the largest backers — organized labor.

Those close to the boycott know that it was only labor *in coalition with other communities* that brought sales down to the point Coors was willing to talk about addressing boycotters' grievances. But instead of sensing an opportunity for actual redress, labor struck a "neutrality agreement" with Coors when it became apparent the then unaffiliated Teamsters' union was making inroads organizing Coors' non-union workforce, a workplace coveted by several other affiliated AFL-CIO unions (machinists, etc.) eager to shore up their declining memberships.

To add insult to injury, labor cut a deal without informing its boycott allies — including the lesbian and gay community — in much the same way as David Scondras has now cut his own deal with Coors without involving or getting feedback from the diverse elements making up our own community.

For example, the boycott in the lesbian and gay community originated on the West Coast, which was Coors' original market — before its market share declined to the point of forcing the company to look eastward for increased sales and profits.

One of the originators of that boycott, Howard Wallace — who, along with Harvey Milk, led the successful effort to take and keep Coors out of Bay area gay bars — remains committed to and active in this boycott. *But he was never consulted by Scondras before Scondras cut his go-it-alone deal with Coors.* Is this solidarity?

It is ironic now that in an era when many lesbian and gay activists, including Scondras, promote national, democratic responses to the many problems we face as a community, Scondras has decided instead to grab some easy publicity and campaign chits, and fashion a premature truce — surrender really — with a corporation deeply repugnant to all progressives.

There is no victory in what you did, Mr. Scondras, only shame.

John Mehring
San Francisco, Ca

Gay Community News is produced by a collective dedicated to providing coverage of events and news in the interest of gay and lesbian liberation. The collective consists of a paid staff of eleven, a general membership of volunteers, and a board of directors elected by the membership.

Opinions reflected in "editorials" represent the views of the paid staff collective. Signed letters and columns represent the views and opinions of the authors only. We encourage all readers to send us comments, criticism, and information, and to volunteer and become members.

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Gay Community News is published weekly (except the last week of April, August and December), by the Bromfield Street Educational Foundation, Inc., a non-profit corporation. Our office is located at 62 Berkeley Street, Boston, MA 02116. (617) 426-4469, TTY/TDD 426-0332.

Second-class postage paid at Boston, Mass. Annual subscription rate is \$33. Institutional rate: \$40. ISSN: [0147-0728]. Member New England Press Association, Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press, COSMEP member.

GCN is included in the Alternative Press Index, published quarterly by the Alternative Press Center, Inc., Box 33109, Baltimore, MD 21218.

Volumes 1-14 of GCN are available on microfilm for \$33/volume. Write GCN/Microfilm for more information.

Postmaster: Send address changes to: Gay Community News, 62 Berkeley St., Boston, MA 02116.

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CHECK OUT OUR LOW, LOW HOLIDAY GIFT SUBSCRIPTION RATES ON PAGE 11!

Something rotten in Montana

Dear *GCN*:

Hello, I received your 'form' letter to prisoner readers and Yes! I am receiving the GCN and I do appreciate its every arrival. In partial response to your questions I would say this:

1) Youth in a relationship? Youth tends to afford (false as it may be) a sense of renewed longevity and as such it is pursued.

2) This prison affords nothing to Black prisoners and in a population of 500 whites, 500 Indians and 4 Blacks, survival requires walking very softly!

3) I'm a 'friend' and a damn good 'writ writer' [jailhouse lawyer] and plan, should "justice" ever ring, to afford the oppressed my acquired wisdom and insight when I'm out.

4) I do music & poetry and will forward some in the future should you be interested.

My case, conviction and subsequent appeals are as follows: Black male serving 90 years (which is 3 times the state sentence for murder) for raping a 15 yr old white female. But here's the railroad: forensic medical evidence found the semen NOT to be mine and moreover there was no physical evidence linking me with this girl, and even over my alibi-witnesses the ALL-WHITE jury of 7 women and 5 men found me guilty. Rape in Montana for whites is 8-15 years. Help if possible.

Robert Norris
700 Conley Lake Rd.
Deer Lodge, MT 59722

No matter how vile or offensive

Dear *GCN*:

I found that Mike Barnicle's Boston *Globe* article, "I'll tolerate gay sex, but don't demand I accept it as well," missed a few important points. He speaks of the AIDS Action Committee's "Safer Sex Can Be Sensuous" pamphlet as if it had been distributed to every household in the Commonwealth. When he declares that "[t]here is no way to get explanations of such things as external water sports into the newspaper," he is quite correct. One point he misses is that this material is not, and never was intended to appear in a (heterosexual) newspaper. Neither was it intended for general distribution to the people of this state. The material in question was intended for distribution to a particular high-risk group — homosexuals. As such, it has been in circulation for nearly two years.

Distribution points do. not include playgrounds and high schools, but rather gay bars and health centers. In these places it is a valuable educational tool. Much of what it contains is just as offensive to gays as it is to non-gays. Most gays don't demand that people like Mr. Barnicle accept gay sex, but it should also be pointed out that most gays do not engage in many of the behaviors that are outlined in the brochure in question. Unfortunately, when Mr. Barnicle states that "[I]t is what it is: a handbook for homosexuals," he misses the point that one cannot stop the spread of AIDS without full awareness of how it is transmitted, no matter how vile or offensive it may be to a person for whom it was not intended.

It is clear that Mr. Barnicle is not an ignorant bigot, he has proven this in his column on more than a few occasions. Let him then take heed of the lesson of his own words: "Society has found out the hard way that certain kinds of homosexual behavior are the third rails of sex." Let's face it, it is not "society," but "gay society" that has learned the hardest lesson, a lesson that must include a knowledge of potentially fatal behaviors.

It is important and commendable that Mr. Barnicle made a point to separate the issue of the AAC brochure and the Massachusetts gay-civil rights bill. It is regrettable that more than a few State Senators have not. Part of the debate on this bill has focused on the content of the AAC brochure. As Senator David Locke (R-Wellesley) put it, "This is put out by some organization or group of individuals which are actively encouraging homosexuality." The AIDS Action Committee is in fact an organization which encourages stopping the spread of AIDS and assisting those who are already infected.

There is a clear difference in encouraging homosexuality and providing valuable health care and information. Indeed, Senator Locke and most of his colleagues would

have never seen the AAC brochure had it not been sent to them by Joseph Stanton, a doctor from Needham, and an opponent of the gay civil rights bill. What people like Dr. Stanton, who oppose using state monies to fund the work of the AAC don't realize is that for the 12,000 explicit brochures that were produced and distributed to the gay community, there were also some 200,000 non-explicit brochures distributed to the community at large.

We must all understand and accept that the war against AIDS has many fronts. No matter how offensive a particular segment of the battle may seem to one person, it is still every citizen's and (gay and straight) taxpayer's right to have access to the information that will best help them protect themselves. This means that different groups need different information.

Now that the Senate has decided to consider whether they should audit the AAC and reduce funding for their information campaign, they have put far more than the gay civil rights bill in danger. Politically motivated moralizing that attaches AIDS education to gay rights endangers the health of all society. Anyone who would question the motivation or the accomplishments of the AAC has undoubtedly made very little effort to find out more about the scope of their work. At a time when the State Legislature had little inclination to address the AIDS crisis (more than five years ago), the AAC was getting its operations under way. Today, they are the largest single organization in New England dedicated solely to the war against AIDS. How many more people need to die before the State Legislature and others understand that AIDS education is far less a matter of morality than a matter of life and death?

Sincerely,
Thomas Hubert

Don't shun Working Assets

Dear *GCN*:

In a letter published in your Nov. 15-21 issue Robert Kaplan alleges that the Visa card available through Working Assets, a progressive financial organization, generates funds which go to the U.S. Olympic Committee, and thus supports a homophobic organization. I think he may be in error (not about the Olympic Committee, but about its receipt of funds from Working Assets).

My understanding is that Visa is a trademark of someone, and that there obviously is a national — even international — network involved with it; but the actual cards are issued by individual banks or groups of banks which have certain latitude to establish the rules for "their" Visa. That is why there is variation in interest rates, grace periods, etc. Some banks appear to have established a relationship with the Olympic Committee to give it a small amount for each transaction using their card; other banks have set up similar arrangements with universities, for example, and solicit among their alumni to switch to their cards as a way of supporting their alma mater.

Working Assets and a bank in Indiana have created a similar program which provides funds to organizations selected each year. I enclose a sheet they sent me as part of their solicitation which indicated the 16 organizations they chose as recipients in 1986 (at \$2,000 each). The U.S. Olympic Committe is not on this list. Included are SANE, CISPES, AFC, Greenpeace, Oxfam, Native American Rights Fund, etc. At least two of the organizations are gay or gay-positive — National Gay and Lesbian Task Force and Equal Rights Advocates.

GCN should check this out for the benefit of its readers. In the meantime, anyone can contact Working Assets directly to get the current story at 800-543-8800. Perhaps the "politically correct" thing to do is not to shun the Working Assets Visa but to have one and use it.

Sincerely,
Philip L. Bereano
Seattle, WA

Direct action in the age of AIDS

By Carl Mann

We Christian Scientists have a term for the blame that churchmen and Reaganites level at our AIDS victims. The same term describes the motivations behind the deliberate withholding of vital information from the innocent and the ignorant. It's called "mental malpractice." Fundamentally, (pardon the pun) this refers to the attitude that we who love others of our own gender deserve to die because we (check one): brought on the plague, invented the plague, spread the plague, gave the plague to their women (figure *that* out!), all of the above, or fill in your own favorite excuse here. Now, it isn't fair to expect people like Jesse Helms and Jerry Falwell to change their attitudes toward us. After all, they get paid very well for being vindictive, mean-spirited and hollow. But there's also the malpractice that we can and must take charge of. This is the malpractice which we homofolks visit on ourselves.

Malpractice? Who, us? Damn right. Look, there's no doubt that certain people in positions of power and public trust will gladly seize any excuse to ship us all off to some unsanitized concentration camp if they can just divert the funds from the gun-and-bomb business. But for lots of us, they don't even have to bother. Too many of us are already imprisoned by our own feelings of incapability, our thoughts that we are personally powerless. That there is nothing we can do but trade wet sex for dry and curse the Neanderthals who confuse Dark Ages police religion with principles of good government. I've heard far too much of that on the streets and in our meeting places. I've heard it from too many close friends. I've heard it at least once too often from myself. But what can one person do?

It only took one person to realize that Magic Marker ink is nearly impossible to remove from Formica. (It soaks right in.) Or maybe he didn't know. But he radically (in every sense) improved the surface of the partition between stalls in the tearoom of a local Burger God my partner and I visited after the October March on Washington. Now, this guy (or perhaps a dyke most courageous) was just as "powerless" and "disenfranchised" as you and I. But the right idea came through anyway. In one inspired move, a blow was struck for all of us. The words of the inspired graffitti artist went something like this:

SAVE YOUR OWN LIFE
DO NOT LET ANYBODY CUM IN
YOUR MOUTH OR UP YOUR ASS.
USE A CONDOM (RUBBER) WHEN
YOU FUCK. DO NOT SHARE A
NEEDLE WITH ANYONE! CALL TOLL-FREE 1-800-342-7514 FOR AIDS INFORMATION.

Just the words the politicians are so afraid of.

My friend David and I wasted no time in correcting the error of our ways. We designed the stickers on the spot. We made the language completely inclusive and no less raw. I call our effort the "Jesse Helms Right-To-Life Committee." (We MUST bear the opposition's identity in mind to avoid attacking each other — and we jolly well DO have the right to live!) We have an offer for you. Here's the deal:

If you subscribe to *GCN*, we have paid to insert a free bonus for you. If you buy from a newsstand or pick it up from a bar, just send a self-addressed, stamped envelope for your free "Press kit" to : Carl Mann, 30 Warren Avenue, Amesbury, MA, 01913.

Here's how it works: This is your chance to "stick it" to the censors and bigots with whom we share this planet. It's easy, fun, and just a little bit scary. But the plain talk on these stickers is just what the Congress of the United States has denied the public. We can fill this "information gap." So you've never had a print job before? It can be VERY pleasurable. (Remember elbow sex?) Now's your chance.

stickers on "solar yellow crack-and-peel stock." Solar yellow is ideal. Pink or plain white are OK, too. But take whatever you can get.

Sure, if the printer is a real jerk, you might get hassled. But most people who are into laying ink on paper believe in the free press like a rabid, born-again Bible-barfer believes in a roaring pit full of flaming faggots, dykes, Communists and Democrats. So if it happens, quietly excuse yourself and find another. If you just can't, write me at the address above. We'll work something out. By the way, price for a thousand, all cut to size, is around fifty-five bucks. Ten thousand cost four hundred clams. Send three dollars plus a self-addressed, stamped envelope for ten. But they're free to prisoners. Any reasonable quantity. Profits and donations buy more awareness materials. Just so you know.

Once you've got 'em, stick 'em. Everywhere you can think of. Evcrywhere that people like us congregate. Maybe even where people like THEM (what a convenient false concept!) congregate. Be bold. Be sneaky. Be closeted, for all I care. But be there. And stick 'em. Stick 'em in the TEAROOMS. Stick 'em in the BARS. Stick 'em in TELEPHONE BOOTHS. Stick one on your poodle and another on your purse, fer goshsakes! But make 'em count. Make 'em stand out. Make 'em stick. Help the good people save their own lives. And show the Jesse Helmses and Jerry Falwells of this great land of ours that we, the people, refuse to die at the imperial command of their savage religion.

Hey, how'd that soapbox get under my feet?

Carl Mann is a freelance technical writer and civil rights worker.

"Speaking Out" is part of our continuing effort to provide a true forum of opinion for the community. We encourage you to send your ideas, feelings and comments to us, and to respond to ideas expressed in this space. The opinions expressed are those of the author and are not intended to represent the views of the GCN membership. Submissions must be TYPED, DOUBLE-SPACED, AND NO LONGER THAN FIVE PAGES. Send to: Speaking Out, GCN, 62 Berkeley St., Boston, MA 02116.

- 1) Find a print shop in your town. If you don't know where one is, use the Yellow Pages.
- 2) Tell the printer that you want a run of

Nuts on target

Streisand is larger-than-life, but maybe you have to be to tackle incest on the silver screen

Nuts. Directed by Martin Ritt. With Barbra Streisand, Richard Dreyfuss, Maureen Stapleton, Karl Malden & Eli Wallach. At the USA-Charles.

By Vicki Gabriner

In an incest survivor's support group I belonged to for a year, we often began our weekly sessions with hysterical laughter at incest humor. It was humor we created and only we could laugh at (and which we would have hated if anyone else had dared say). The jokes were our way of letting off steam before we could focus in on the painful sharing we knew was coming. When I went to see *Nuts* with a friend (another survivor), I asked her as we were coming out of the movie, "What was it about?" She said, "I don't know, I forgot!" We both burst into laughter: to let off steam and to share in the comradeship of forgetting, that skill that got us through so much of our childhood.

It seems as though most of the reviewers also "forgot," because almost no one thought to mention that *Nuts* was a movie about a woman who had been a victim of incest. And oddly, none of the promotional material for the movie even alludes to it either, although it is obviously the turning point of the story. Hmm, interesting, isn't it? Luckily, the word about *Nuts* is being passed through friendship and survivor networks. It's nice to have advance warning before seeing this charged and evocative movie.

Nuts is the story of Claudia Draper (Barbra Streisand), a high-paid prostitute who has been arrested for murdering one of her clients. Her parents (Maureen Stapleton and Karl Malden) and their expensive lawyer, backed up by the reports of two psychiatrists at the New York County Prison Hospital (Eli Wallach playing the featured doctor) are trying to have her declared mentally incompetent to stand trial. This would result in commitment to a

mental hospital, a finale Claudia desperately doesn't want. The movie really tracks Claudia's attempt to fight the charge of mental incompetence, so that she can stand trial and prove that she killed out of self-defense. After punching out Mr. Rich Lawyer within the first 15 minutes of the movie, she is assigned a Legal Aid lawyer, Aaron Levinsky (Richard Dreyfuss). And the legal battle is on!

In the course of this battle, *Nuts* highlights issues around prostitution, the abuses of the legal and mental health system, and the scars of childhood sexual abuse. Miraculously, *Nuts* gives us all this without manufacturing a sexual screen romance. That's almost unheard of in film. Claudia does not lose her sense of what she has to do because of raging female desire.

I don't know if this is a "great" movie (whatever that is); there are problems with it of course. But, it is a very good movie and important because it takes on the issue of incest, framing it cinematically with accuracy and sensitivity.

The strongest part of the movie for me was the second half, the competency hearing itself. The truth of Claudia's childhood unravels. Lots of good, intense close up facial shots. Rose Kirk, the mother, loving, afraid, at a loss to understand why her daughter changed drastically in sixth grade becoming withdrawn and living in a fantasy world. Arthur Kirk, the step-father, explaining his theory of running his family like a business. "You want someone to do something for you, you pay them." Portraying himself as the loving, protective father, bathing his daughter, getting up in the night to comfort her. Aaron Levinsky beginning to figure it out. Claudia Draper at the defense table, always drawing figures except when she is interrupting testimony with her comments.

Rose, upset as Aaron yells at Art on the witness stand: she says, "Art wouldn't do

Continued on page 10

Films of angst and intellect

European feminist directors offer dense, disturbing fare

Invisible Adversaries. Directed by Valie Export. **The Trouble With Love.** Directed by Helke Sander. At the Brattle Theater, Cambridge, Mass. One night only, Jan. 19.

By Elizabeth Pincus

Two feminist independent films by prominent European directors will show at the Brattle Theater on Tues., Jan. 19. Dense and wordy, both films assume an intellectual stance uncommon in feminist offerings from the United States. Though made nearly ten years apart, the movies share a common structure — they present basic plots of love gone sour as starting points for examining the complex nature of political forces and psychological motivations.

The quirkier of the two is *Invisible Adversaries*, a 1977 production by Austrian director Valie Export.

Described as zany feminist sci-fi, this film has screened often in academic circles but is now only available with enlivened color in a theatrically released 35mm print. *Invisible Adversaries* focuses on a young photographer living in Vienna who believes that an insidious dominating force has been unleashed to infiltrate society through brain control. Her anarchist lover claims that personal relationships oppress in ways that are similar to political oppression by the state. As their interactions waver between warmth and hostility, stunning images of still photography are juxtaposed within the film to jar any linear sense of progression.

Director Export, apparently concerned with Freud, Mozart and other heavies from Vienna, presents urban panoramas throughout her film that lend the architecture of Vienna a weight to match its social and cultural history. She also explores images less-traditionally revered — photographs of shit, a golden shower scene,

and an extremely grotesque kitchen sequence that depicts food transforming into live animals squirming beneath the knife.

Invisible Adversaries questions the nature of creativity. Without positing a definite conclusion, it implies that women can be empowered by using the tools of art and writing to examine their worlds. Its companion film at the Brattle, *The Trouble With Love*, feels bleaker, though it employs a flat, self-conscious humor to mock its own seriousness. Still, this 1984 production, by West German Helke Sander is a rather tedious, pretentious study of modern love relationships.

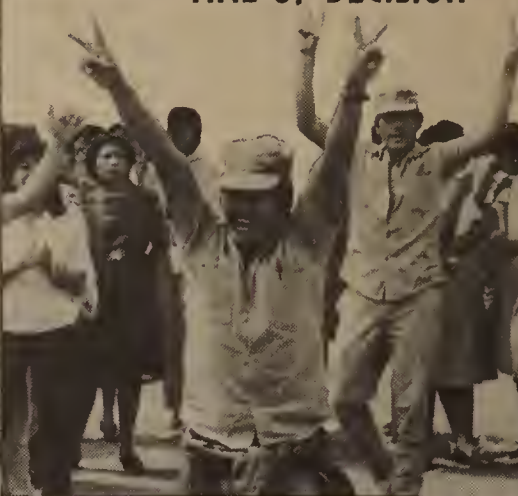
Lead character Freya mopes about with pathetic self-pity over the loss of her lover Traugott to his ex-lover Irmtraut, who was also briefly involved with Freya. Common enough themes — i.e. how can ex-lovers remain friends and how can women love men without losing themselves — are ground into dull absurdity by the film's plodding tone. Director Sander, a founder of the feminist journal *Frauen und Films*, chooses to overload her movie with overt talk of fascism, jealousy and tragedy, rather than revealing themes within the story context. The effect is leaden, except when voice-over narration offers levity and wry perspective to all the melodrama.

The Trouble With Love opens with promising provocation. The credits roll to sinister music and skewed visual symbols suggesting themes of chaos and instability. Unfortunately, the movie proceeds with too much verbiage. While the lead players are near caricatures of women in the throes of raising consciousness, the main male character is too bland to believably command so much attention in the first place. Nonetheless, there is certainly merit in this rigorous exploration of women's experiences that remains unconcerned with commercial appeal. □

BREAKTHROUGH

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Volume XI, No. 2 Fall 1987 \$1.00

El Salvador — TIME OF DECISION



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- Sex, Porn & Feminism
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Those interested in submitting proposals should contact the conference office at 202-797-3708, or write:

NLGHF/AAPHR Program Committee
P.O. Box 65472
Washington, DC 20035.

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No simple song and dance

At 10% Revue a community begins to find itself

By Michael Bronski

First of all this isn't a review of *Ten Percent Revue*, recently in town at the new performing space at the Club Cafe. The troupe is better than ever, but it isn't the show that I want to write about so much as going to the performance and sitting there in a room full of lesbians and gay men watching a show about a shared community.

Three things happened during that evening that impressed upon me the barriers we throw up against each other, the misperceptions that keep us apart.

Before we sat down for the show I was chatting with a lesbian who does political work. She mentioned that the room and its inhabitants looked rather yuppified. The remark surprised me because I recognized many of the men I knew from other settings — including the Fenway and the somewhat diminished tea room circuit. These men have boring desk and department store jobs, spend most of their salary on housing, and might "dress up" for their evening out before going to a bar in their jeans and leathers. There were also some women there — lesbians — who were obviously not in middle management positions. These were everyday people, defying classification and pigeon holing.

Later in the evening a man I know from the Boston Ramrod came up to me. He said he would have come over sooner but he saw I was talking to a fashionable woman and didn't want to interfere.

During the intermission I ran into another man, an acquaintance from opening nights at theater events. We have a mutual friend in common but hardly ever speak since we know almost nothing about one another. He was as well dressed as he usually is: stylish, expensive yet casual. He is the sort who picks up the bar tab for his whole party while I worry about the price of a bourbon. We both seemed surprised to see one another. Me, because I could not imagine that he would ever go to what I considered "political gay theater"; he, perhaps because I was not dressed in my usual opening night theater statement (dirty jeans, and a black leather jacket with lots of zippers and engineer boots) and no doubt because he never expected to find me in what he considered to be a chic watering hole. We only nodded to one another, said hello, and went on to speak to other people. But I think we were both left wondering, at least for a moment — the preconceptions seemed to be getting a little closer to home.

During the second act of the show one of the men sings "Obituary," a song about the death of a gay Hispanic man. I am always moved by it and was just holding back tears when I saw the man sitting next to me (the

chairs are very close here) was sobbing. His friend held him and then they left the theater for a few minutes. In the lobby after the show I overheard him discussing the service for his lover who had just died a few days before. The tears I was holding back came more freely now.

I realized that this was what I felt was missing the whole evening. There was a connectedness here — audience members had turned to look at one another with sympathy, a recognition of shared grief.

Ten Percent Revue is a great show — an unusual show about both lesbians and gay men — but what brought us together in the end was the tears of a stranger. Finally, we weren't a bunch of people who had all bought tickets on the same night, but a community. A community with skewed views of who one another are, and a community with real differences, but a community nevertheless.

And that is no simple song and dance.

Note: We have it on good information that Ten Percent Revue will return to Boston within a few months. Stay posted for details. □

theatre

Needles

Continued from page 3

group in Brooklyn, of plans to distribute clean needles in defiance of state law. ADAPTS's proposal drew fire from Gov. Mario Cuomo and Mayor Ed Koch, who both stressed the importance of operating within the law. Koch said he would support a limited experiment of distributing clean needles if done legally, while Cuomo continues to oppose any such program because he said he believes it would encourage drug use.

Lamb reported that some public health officials in Liverpool said they were puzzled by the apparent reluctance of officials in the United States to effectively combat AIDS. Alan Matthews, a Liverpool drug treatment professional, accused the U.S. of "bad prevention planning" for not yet adopting needle-exchange programs. Lamb said further details about the proposed Boston effort will be available upon his return from Europe. Barring political obstacles, Lamb estimated that a needle-exchange program could begin within six months. □

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By Stephanie Poggi and Ed Cohen

A British dyke and self-acclaimed “professional pervert” talks about the 1987 U.S. March on Washington, turbulent times for English queers and the founding of the first national gay AND lesbian paper in Britain. This interview was held in D.C. the day after the March with GCN staffer Stephanie Poggi and Ed Cohen, a San Francisco gay theorist who spent time in Britain researching the trial of Oscar Wilde.

Steph: Jan, what brought you to the March?

Jan: Well, I heard about it in the spring when Robin Tyler did a one-night show at the London Lesbian/Gay Center. We had dinner the next night before going on to a drag show, and we exchanged a lot of information. I told her what was going on in Britain — she was interested — that was the main thing. It's nice to have other people ask you questions — international stuff helps you to break through things in your head. But I didn't know if I was going to be able to afford to come or not. About two weeks before the March, I just decided to borrow the money. If the girl's got to go, she's got to go. (laughs)

The reason I wanted to go was because I knew it was going to be big. The biggest gay/lesbian march we ever had in London, and it's never been a mass national mobilization, was 15,000 people in 1985. I heard they were expecting between a quarter and a half a million. So I had the sense that it was going to be very very important because of the size of it and the symbolism that would have — not just for American queers, but for queers everywhere else as well.

So, I came because I wanted to be here to learn from it — and also because I think AIDS has had so much more of an impact in this country than in Britain. You know, I didn't expect things like the PWA contingent right at the front of the March. And all the politics around that as well as the caring — it's really interesting — such a powerful combination of politics and spirituality. And I came to make lots of contacts, and to have a holiday in America. And to have my mind blown. (laughter) I mean it's still sinking in, really. I'm sure it will continue to do so for a long time...especially when we realize how hard it's going to be for other people to get to hear about it.

Ed: Jan, you mentioned the combination of things — politics and spirituality — do you have a sense that's something that happens here that doesn't happen in Britain? I mean, why do we get hundreds of thousands of gay people marching? I think of a march I went to in London. Remember, I was sort of freaked out because it was so tiny compared to the marches in San Francisco.

Jan: Yes! (laughs) Did you feel more vulnerable marching in London?

Ed: It was very strange because we were marching on the side of the road and there were two or three people abreast and we were just walking through the city and everybody there was so excited because it was more people than they had ever seen. You know, we get more people for a vigil. So I was very disconcerted by it.

Jan: It's very hard going in that sense. I think everybody has got to be amazed that 650,000 queers marched. That has just got to have a huge impact on every single person who was there. That helps give people some kind of vision about what it's all about. But things are beginning to change in Britain — of course, it isn't the same situation in the sense that you're getting rid of Reagan next year. You know that for sure. That must make such a difference. We just got Thatcher back for the third time. We might be

get rid of her the next time either.

Steph: We don't know who we're going to get though. The things that put Reagan in may not have changed — the forces that made him be somebody so many people wanted, overwhelmingly.

Jan: But to get back to AIDS. I think what was very evident at the March is that there has been so much death and loss in this country — it's just incredible. And people have really had to face up to their mortality; the kind of affect that's had on people both on the individual and communal level is powerful. In some sense, it sounds so corny to say — that AIDS has become a very positive experience, but that's certainly the kind of vibes that I'm getting off it. That loss and sadness and mourning can be acknowledged — I mean people are so afraid of expressing any kind of emotion in Britain.

Ed: Well, it's just now that people are beginning to be able to say things like, “In the midst of all this loss, positive things have come out of it.” Because it has changed the way organizing's gone on in this country. I really think that if it wasn't for AIDS, the rapport between the gay male and lesbian communities would be much less than it is at this moment. In a lot of ways, very deep divisions have been healed.

Steph: Could you expand that a little?

Ed: I think AIDS has changed the orientation of politics. It used to be that a lot of middle-class white gay men were out to be like straight men. Necessarily in the women's community there's been an awareness of the oppression of lesbians as women *and* as lesbians and that sort of precluded the sense of solidarity around gay men who were saying, “We want to be entrepreneurs.” In the face of AIDS, there's been a shift — it's no longer that we want to be left alone to do whatever we do in our bedrooms and we'll have our white male privilege like everybody else. AIDS has made many gay men realize their alliance with other oppressed groups in a more direct way. Around basic issues — like the insufficiency of health care, the insufficiency of housing — direct life issues that because of certain kinds of class and racial privilege many gay men haven't had to deal with before.

It's one of those ironic things, but it's out of our death and our own pain that we come to be able to recognize other people's pain and oppression. In some ways, that becomes a more solid ground for organizing coalition politics.

Jan: I was just thinking, it was so nice to be looking at all kinds of lesbians and gay men all weekend. Yesterday, I was taking lots of photographs at the demonstration and I was trying to be conscious about who I was taking photographs of, because you have to be in Britain. But I realized I didn't have to think about it very much at all. Everywhere I stuck my camera there was such a combination — there were so many women there, weren't there? It was just fucking fantastic. And there were lots of Black people there, people of color — lots of older people there.

It was just really brilliant.

Steph: Could you say a little about what lesbians and gay men of color are doing in Britain?

Jan: Well, there is a Black lesbian and gay caucus in a new national activist organization — The Organization of Lesbian and Gay Activists (OLGA) and other locally-based Black lesbian and gay groups. But we have nothing like the National Coalition of Black Lesbians and Gays you have here. Racism is generally getting more discussed in the women's movement and I see people beginning to understand the difference between autonomy and separatism. We've been through five years of white people being freaked out and guilt-tripping about racism, but there are alliances and we're beginning to hold hands a bit more often. One of the biggest things I got out of the March was that we're lagging behind on this issue, but I think we're going in the same direction.

Steph: You said earlier that other things in Britain were beginning to change, too. Would you talk more about that?

Jan: Yes, the last two years have been particularly turbulent. A lot of people right now are still recovering from the fact that Thatcher just got back in, for five years, so it feels like a bit of a lull. It is going to get harder. The political situation in Britain if you're a radical is like — you grit your teeth (laughter) all the time and find ways of having fun and staying alive. Actually people don't really have their heads into having fun very much in Britain; politics are very serious, it's very disciplined — in the negative sense of that word.

But anyway, I think '85 was quite a turning point. A lot of things happened. The city government or Greater London Council (GLC), which was abolished last year, was still going and still run by a radical left labor group that won the elections several years ago. They just completely transformed everything. One of the GLC councillors and the leader came out very much in favor of lesbian and gay rights and pumped a lot of money into resources for the community. So we got things like the first lesbian/gay center and set up lesbian/gay police monitoring groups and lesbian employment rights groups; we got more money to the gay switchboard and phone line, and grants for a gay bereavement project. All these things help provide an infrastructure for getting a bit more organized. So there was grant aid going on at a government policy level.

The GLC was also very much involved in producing a London charter for lesbian/gay rights and it was a whole load of policy recommendations — 142. The preamble was all about heterosexism — the GLC put heterosexism on the mainstream political agenda.

In '85 we also had, as I said, the biggest pride march we've had for sometime. Lesbian/gay rights motions were put up and, for the first time, discussed and passed at both the Labour Party Congress and Trade Union Conference. We were there, we were on the mainstream agenda. But we had a fuck of a reaction. That's been for two reasons — the negative reason is that there's

been an AIDS backlash. The positive reason is that we actually made some inroads; it was bloody hard holding the line, but we actually managed to push it forward.

In 1986, the lesbian/gay rights motion went up again to the Labour Party conference and this time it won 79 percent of the vote in support. You need a two-thirds majority to make sure something goes into their manifesto for the general election campaign — so we made it. I'm a member of Labour Campaign for Lesbian/Gay Rights, which works inside the labour movement. Four of us — me and three men, with advice from lesbian lawyers — wrote a pamphlet that was called “Legislation for lesbian/gay rights manifesto.” It was to broaden the agenda — because previously gay law reform campaigns were run mainly by Campaign for Homosexual Equality (CHE), which is all white boys. And the only issue they ever highlighted was the age of consent — 21 for men and a lot of restrictions after that as well. So we included protection at work, employment rights, suing for damages, immigration, housing, violence, lots of issues around parenting: fostering and adoption.

Then, in response to the queer-bashing hotting up we decided to go on the offensive, do something positive, and prepare for the next general election campaign. So we decided to call a national queer conference and we got CHE to join us — they could provide the money. And we got a respectable organization to lend its name — the National Council for Civil Liberties. The conference, which lasted two days, ended up being in the middle of the general election campaign. The conference was used against the Labour Party by the national press. But just as important, it was the first time there's been a political gathering of lesbians and gay men on a national level. It wasn't just white gay men who were there, it was people beginning to come together and discussing issues and educating ourselves.

We tried to produce a charter, but it was impossible to squeeze it all in. It was very ambitious. We were told there was no way we could pull it off when we started organizing it, but 500 people ended up coming. Out of the conference has come this new national lesbian/gay campaign organization — the National Organization of Lesbian and Gay Activists (OLGA) — maybe the equivalent of your National Lesbian/Gay Task Force. That was the point of having the conference in the first place. Now we're trying to get CHE to merge with us.

Steph: What led up to things really taking off in 1985 — what kinds of things besides the GLC getting into it?

Jan: Well, the GLC provided resources. Relative to yours, we're a poor movement really. There are the rich white gay men, but most of them put their money into more social or cultural groups than overtly political ones. That influx of funding really made a difference. Plus, having very respectable organizations and leading politicians willing to stick their necks out for you and people really understanding what the issues are so they aren't frightened to get up and speak about it. Some people are frightened that people will think they're queer and that stops them more than what they think

politically about the issue. It's very interesting that Jesse Jackson brought his wife up onto the platform at the March. There's no way that Ken Livingston [Member of Parliament and former leader of the GLC] would bring his lover up on the platform; she wouldn't fucking do it anyway — it's completely irrelevant. I thought that was a quite interesting sign of insecurity on his part about the issue. But you know, Neil Kinnock [head of the Labour Party] would do the same thing.

Ed: There weren't that many supportive councillors on the GLC —

Jan: Well, they changed over time.

Ed: Well, you did a lot of education.

Jan: Yeah. (laughs)

Ed: Jan, maybe you could talk about the women's support unit — that was so impressive.

Jan: Well, that was where I worked until the GLC was abolished. The GLC set up a number of new political units — like an enterprise board, which did imaginative job creation. And they set up a radical group to plan for the city environment, and they set up a number of new equality groups as well. There was a unit for democratization of police because in London they are accountable directly to the national government instead of to the city government. They set up a race unit and a women's unit, a disability resource team, equal opportunities unit with contracts and compliance within it. You know, that's where a public body can't give a contract to someone for 50,000 cans of baked beans or whatever if they aren't practicing equal employment. They borrowed that from American work; contract compliance happened here before it happened in Britain. It was the GLC that put contract compliance on the map in Britain. The government is about to introduce legislation to get rid of it.

The women's support unit started up in '83 I think, with three workers and 300,000 pounds grant budget. I was about the 21st or 22nd woman added to the staff — at the end of '83. At the time the GLC was abolished — March '86 — the women's support unit had a staff of 86 and an annual grants budget of 13 million pounds.

Steph: You said a staff of 86 — and the government was paying for this? (laughter)

Jan: The city government. Which is one of the reasons why Thatcher wanted to abolish it. The GLC did a lot of great things but it really depended on officers like me doing overtime and a few key leading politicians to support stuff so you'd get things done — and a lot of people from the community who'd pitch in and make it happen.

Steph: How did the GLC get abolished?

Jan: It was March 31st, 1986 — that's when the central government took it over. It took a three-year campaign to do it. Seventy-nine percent of the population in London said “no.” “Say no to no say.” There were supposed to be elections for the GLC the year



Pink Paper staff (L-R): Lisa Power, Jan Parker, Nigel Polglase and Stephen Burn.

before abolition. Before they even introduced abolition legislation, they introduced the bill to cancel those elections, because they said the GLC was going to get abolished the year after that anyway. Can you believe that? And they got that through. That was the first time elections have ever been cancelled in Britain apart from in time of war.

Steph: Does the lesbian/gay center in London still exist?

Jan: Yeah. That's still getting funding, but who knows after next March. I think I'm probably going to find it quite frustrating going back home. We have very much the mentality in Britain of “Don't go off and make a fuss about it because it'll only make it worse” — you know, they'll only put somebody worse in Bork's place for the Supreme Court. Some of the speeches at the March were addressing that kind of mentality. But it's very hard in Britain because the Tories have such a huge majority; they can push through anything they fucking want to. So after eight years, it does get to the point where you think “What is the fucking point of marching through the streets of London? Is it going to make the *slightest* bit of difference?” The Miners brought down the Heath government in 1972 — who the fuck is going to bring down this government?

I think we have got to have a massive rethink about what a new left agenda is — the Labour Party is still very much fantasizing about being back in the 1940s — the great 1945 government. British society has just changed so much since then — they're completely out of touch with it really. The GLC was about rainbow coalition-type politics and that was right for London because London is that kind of city — but I don't know if that will have a powerful relevance for other parts of the country in the way that it seems to have in America.

At the same time, we have got much more of a union tradition on the left. But there are lessons that we can both learn from each other. The level of your lesbian/gay organizing in unions is way behind ours from what I can make out. You know what I mean, it's not like we're a backward movement struggling to emulate our American sisters and brothers. But it would be very useful to have much more of an even information exchange.

Steph: I think there's a lot less labor consciousness or class consciousness in the lesbian/gay movement here.

Ed: Yeah — although a lot of people came to the labor event at the March. It's just that labor itself is so embattled here. There's never been a sense of labor consciousness or class as there is in Britain. I mean, union organizing was a way of orienting yourself in the world so it made sense to be out in your union. That was a step because your union identity was an important part of you personally. In this country we've never gotten to where people are really positively, heavily union-identified — except in certain circumstances like the Wobblies, in certain heavy industrial unions and increasingly in the service sector like SEIU.

Jan: In terms of lesbian and gay organization in unions, the best one now going is the one I'm in. It's the national association of local government officers. I'm a lesbian/gay officer for the Association of London Authorities — a professional pervert! (laughter) The labour boroughs set up the position to try to continue funding the priorities the GLC had. Anyway, the union has a proposal that there be a reserved place on the national secretary level for lesbians and gay men.

And then there's the alliance that happened during the miners strike — all the lesbian and gay support groups for the miners, which was, you know, amazing. I mean, they're the most macho trade union, and who is it we got the biggest representation of at the pride march after the defeat of the strike in '85 — big mining communities from South Wales. It was fucking fantastic.

Steph: I almost couldn't believe it when I read about it all. A few people from GCN — Larry Goldsmith, Brian Flynn and Bob Sutcliffe — interviewed one of the eight lesbian/gay groups supporting the miners. (See “British Queers Dig Deep for the Striking Miners,” March 16, 1985, Vol. 12, No. 34.) I remember it was days before the article was published that the miners were defeated. So you read this really inspiring thing, and then at the end, you know, “As we go to press...the National Coal Board has announced its victory over the miners.”

Jan: Emotional. It was very emotional. It was terribly sad. When that strike failed, people cried about that.

Ed: I got there just when it was over. God, people were so despondent. No one wanted to do anything — everyone thought it was just hopeless. Everyone had their community that they were supporting — in Wales or in Yorkshire or whatever and they'd go up to these places — and it just collapsed.

Steph: But it seems like some level of solidarity has remained from that.

Jan: Oh yeah, I think so. I mean, it's still a real confidence booster — we broke through the most extraordinary barriers. The situation in Britain is full of those kind of contradictory things — on the one hand, you've got this right-wing attacking you and on the other hand, you're getting displays of solidarity from miners. I don't know what's going to happen next.

Steph: Jan, what do you hope the role of your new newspaper, *The Pink Paper*, is going to be in the movement?

Jan: I hope *The Pink Paper* is going to help get some kind of discussion going in Britain. We haven't had a national paper for four years and we've never had a gay and lesbian paper. Stephen Burn and I — we're the two editors — we want to have politics in there, fun and lifestyle stuff in there, and we want to have sex in there. In one of our first features we intend to go around to all the pubs with a microphone and ask lesbians what they think gay men do in bed and ask gay men what they think lesbians do in bed.

But we're going to be very different from what's out there. We have five pink prin-

ciples, as we call them: 1) we're for all people who prefer their own sex; 2) we'll help to build “pink” communities and we encourage contributions from readers; 3) we campaign for the civil rights of all lesbian and gay people; 4) we have a policy to show positive images of homosexuality; 5) and we'll donate our profits to lesbian and gay organizations.

Steph: How did you decide to call it *The Pink Paper*?

Jan: It's an attempt to get away from using the words lesbian and gay, trying to come up with something that isn't strongly identified either with the male or female part of the community. It also lends itself quite nicely to a problem column called “pink shrink” and interviews called “pink profile,” gossip columns called “pinkingshears.” We're going to have a sports page — an excuse to have some very nice photographs.

Ed: Who's funding *The Pink Paper*?

Jan: Stephen Burn was the editor of *Capital Gay*, which is the London free monthly newspaper. He's lovers with a guy called Dr. Stephen Burton and they got a business proposal together and have come up with a good deal with the bank. They're also risking money of course. So, the set-up is going to be Stephen Burn as editor and myself as half-time editor because I have to keep my other job on as well. *The Pink Paper* has very shoe-string salaries. But Stephen and I will have editorial control over the newspaper — Burton won't have any say in it. There's a third worker, Lisa Power, who's advertising manager and the office manager is Nigel Polglase. And that's the only paid staff so we're going to rely a lot on people's support to make it. But nothing ever makes it if it doesn't have that support anyway.

It will come out weekly. It will be interesting to see if we can do it. One question is whether we're going to be able to get across that whole gay men/lesbian divide; the second thing is in terms of content — we want it to be about lesbian and gay life in Britain, but not just writing about lesbian and gay events. We want to have a lesbian and gay perspective on everything. The third thing that will really make or break us is advertising because we're going to be free. I think the women are going to more than pay their way in advertising because the women's movement is just so big and a lot of that is lesbian energy — but it hasn't had any way to come out yet. We'll also try to get mainstream people to advertise with us, like book publishers, rights groups. If anyone knows anyone who wants to advertise their services — there are lots of things that you've got here that we haven't. Where do you get your finger cots from? You know I don't think dykes have even heard of that in Britain.

There's just been such a huge gap in the gay press — people aren't going to realize how big the gap has been until something comes along to fill it.

The Pink Paper made its debut on Nov. 12, 1987. To subscribe or for more information, write The Pink Paper, 151 Rosebury Ave., London EC1R 4QX. □

Spike heels, ladders and personal baggage

Program notes belie worthwhile experimental performances

A Dance About... by Jolanta Krukowska and **Life Among Forms** and **Beyond the Time and Space: The Bride of the Seagull** by Netta Plotsky. Solo experimental performances by women in the International Electra Festival presented by Double Edge Theatre and Women in Theatre Festival. At Double Edge Theatre in Allston. Krukowska and Plotsky repeat on Jan. 22, other performances continue through Jan. 24.

By Mara Math

“**P**erformance art:” that ambiguous term which can encompass drama, comedy, dance and improvisation — and combinations thereof — is a difficult genre to define, not least of all for performance artists. “My actions are a search and a revision of my personal meanings,” writes Jolanta Krukowska of Poland. Netta Plotsky of Israel says that “My solo performance is made up of multiple movement structures.” These inauspicious program notes by the performers left us giggling in our seats and murmuring, “This program guide is resonant with word meanings,” but I’m happy to report that both performances on the second night of the Electra Festival were worthwhile experiences.

In her rather austere “A Dance About...,” Krukowska begins by strapping on one shoe of a pair (the highest spike heels in the world) and danc-

ing through the rocks scattered on the stage. She then uses the larger rocks to symbolize the accretion of personal baggage: “my place,” “my art,” “marriage,” “habit” and “solitude,” with art being a weight, a comforting pillow, a sensual/sexual delight. It’s a simple concept, but done well. Each of these rocks goes into a plastic garbage bag hanging overhead, and some of the tension in the piece comes from wondering when the bag will finally break. When we saw the show on Jan. 9, there was added tension in the audience because the ropes holding the bag broke at the beginning of the piece. Krukowska escaped unscathed that time, and didn’t flinch, either, when at the show’s end the scheduled rockfall gouged a visible bleeding wound in her leg.

The tableau with which Netta Plotsky opens “Life Among Forms” as the Black Hat character is a wonderful one: wearing a battered and extravagant black hat, she is buried in and nearly indistinguishable from the large squashy bed where she listens to opera. Stalked by Death, in the person of a silent, black-garbed actor, she begs “Give me please five minutes more,” and then uses her respite to sneak out of her room, leaving Death hungry. Plotsky then becomes the “White character,” dressed in a white plastic mac for “Variations on Ophelia.”

A playful bag lady, she roams the theatre, engaging and charming the audience (although those on the other side of the room complained of being unable to see or hear her). Sitting on a theatregoer’s lap, she calls out for “Netta” and “Plotsky?” —



Netta Plotsky in “Beyond the Time and Space: The Bride of the Seagull.”

“Where are you?” She throws Hershey bars at the audience, reversing the usual theatre dynamic and transforming us into the observed, the animals in a cage. Returning to the stage, she performs some more vaudevillean little-girl antics, has sex with a wheelbarrow, and drowns herself in a small basin of water, leaving a haunting image of her empty white raincoat spread out in the wheelbarrow before Death wheels her away.

While amusing for the first two-thirds or so, this segment goes on approximately for ever, and two friends who saw the show separately reported the identical urge to say, “Go to bed now, Netta, that’s enough.” In the final segment of this trilogy, “Butterfly Captured in Memories,” the movements and ambiance are very similar: an elderly lady makes some hilarious missteps as she tries to dance, and sighs, “If I only could fly towards my youth.” The trilogy is so “much of a muchness” that it would benefit considerably by being edited into one shorter, tighter work.

One would not have high hopes of any piece based on Jonathan Livingston Seagull’s mate (“I came with three wounds. The wound of love. The wound of life. The wound of death.”). However, Plotsky’s second work, “Beyond the Time and Space: The Bride of the Seagull,” is a major triumph. Her study of Japanese theatre is evident in this piece, showing the influence of Butoh, a post-Hiroshima school of theatre concerned with the human struggle. Wearing a white mask, Plotsky slowly breaks out from a cocoon of packing excelsior, her movements eerily disjointed, and we come to realize that although she appears to be facing us, the mask is on the back of her head. Plotsky achieves many technical feats in this piece, including climbing up and down a 20-foot ladder backwards, but more important is the intensity of the feeling communicated. □

lawyer, when she clicks the glass in the courtroom to prevent her lawyer from cross-examining her parents on the witness stand, when she collapses after her father’s testimony. All this felt very much from real life. I could hear some of my own conversations, and my body, mind, and heart responded deeply to what the screen presented. It is healing to have something of oneself reflected in the mass culture.

The film also has its humorous moments, cushioning some of the heaviness. There are great, very funny one-liners, and some not so funny at all. When the District Attorney asks Claudia why she had an abortion, she explains, “I don’t believe in childhood.”

Nuts has its weaknesses. There are several lesbian and racial references that I could have lived without. Easily. It is a bit too Hollywood, too beautiful, too overdone in places. Streisand always looks incredible, even when she is drugged and flaked out. And although she gives a wonderful performance, she never quite stops being Streisand. Fortunately, I like her a lot, but she is quite a presence.

It is probably that presence that we have

Continued on page 12

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Nuts

Continued from page 6

anything to hurt Claudia.” “How would you know, momma?” The mother beginning to get it. And as the truth finally spills out, the father yells at Claudia to affirm his innocence. Claudia collapses, “Don’t let him hurt me again!”

And on the second day of the hearing, when her mother cries “I never knew,” Claudia aims hard, “You didn’t want to know, momma.”

It is a powerful portrayal. Claudia is “nuts,” of course, as all of us are who have survived childhood abuse. Really, we are wounded, and have been adaptive in the face of an unbelievably profound betrayal. Claudia fights against society’s definition of what “nuts” is about, saying “I won’t be ‘nuts’ for you.” I think she knows she needs help, but she is damned if she is going to let others define her reality for her. It is the child who couldn’t defend herself finally taking her space in the world.

I could feel the struggle, the “craziness” in Claudia: when she punches out the

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Raleigh

Continued from page 1

City Council elections. In particular, activists aimed to oust 10-year incumbent Ed Walters, a hardware store owner aligned with the city's conservative business community. Walter's district included the largely gay neighborhood of Oakwood.

Despite his constituency, Walters vehemently opposed gay rights laws, saying that anti-gay violence wasn't "much of a problem" in Raleigh.

Walters said the scissors-stabbing of Kilby was the victim's own fault. "I don't condone the fact that a gal's short dress is any reason to condone rape. But if a stranger approaches him (Kilby) and asks him for a date, and he says yes, I think he's sticking his neck out."

Running against Walters was Mary Watson Nooe, a Goodwill Industries employee who strongly supported gay rights. Nooe's campaign staff was Black and white, young and old, gay and straight — and hard working. On election day, she edged out Walters by fewer than 200 votes.

Not only did Nooe win, but so did every progressive council candidate who ran. The winners had ridden in on a wave of dissatisfaction with the city's booming, unmanaged growth — but none of them had shied away from social issues such as equality for Black people, lesbians and gay men. (At the same meeting they passed the gay-rights ordinance, the new council strengthened its policy against contracting with companies that do business in South Africa.)

"I believe that the current council is really concerned about human beings," said Pilkington, who sees the new ordinance as "the first little baby step" toward full equality for Raleigh's lesbians and gay men.

"A great deal of credit needs to go to the Human Resources and Human Relations Advisory Committee," said Bob Kolin of Raleigh Citizens for Gay and Lesbian Equality. "The hearing they sponsored back in August, which many of the council members attended, provided a forum for the problem of violence and discrimination against gay men and lesbians to be brought out into the open. Before that it was a hidden issue."

"The members of our City Council do not want to see that kind of thing taking place in our city. They realize violence and crime and discrimination are not productive in a city that is growing and trying to attract businesses to the area."

Council member Franklin said her biggest concern stemmed from reports of unequal treatment by city police. "I don't want there to be any confusion on the part of the police that any member of the community — regardless of their sexual orientation — should be able to trust that they will be cared for by our public safety system," she said. □

Cops

Continued from page 3

pear that the incident couldn't have happened as described in the complaint."

Call for help becomes nightmare

Chaplic gave the following account of the incident:

Chaplic telephoned the Cambridge Police from a cafe in Cambridge, indicated that she needed detoxification treatment and asked for transportation to a facility. Two officers arrived in a police wagon and instead of taking Chaplic to a detox center, they took her to the Albany Street Center — a shelter without facilities for alcohol detoxification. Chaplic objected but was left there anyway. After another phone call, several other officers arrived and threatened to file criminal charges against Chaplic for continuing to request a detox facility. Several officers taunted and laughed at Chaplic, then handcuffed her and transported her to Cambridge Police Headquarters.

Upon arrival, Chaplic was ridiculed further, then handcuffed or held to hot pipes or other hot metal objects causing severe burns on her left forearm and right hand. Despite her repeated screams, Chaplic was not released or offered aid. She was later placed in a cell and her requests for medical treatment were ignored. When she was released at about 3:40 a.m., the Police Department did not take her to a hospital despite clearly visible injuries. Chaplic hired a taxi to take her to the emergency room of Cambridge

Hospital, and was released later that morning after treatment for second and third degree burns.

Chaplic then went to the Cambridge-Somerville Intervention Center, an alcohol detox facility, and was admitted for treatment. After a couple of days in detox, Chaplic called youth counselor Molly Baldwin to seek help and to express her continuing trauma over the incident.

Multiple injustices

Baldwin and attorney Wade stress that Chaplic was completely free of injury before being taken into police custody that night. In addition to charging the Cambridge Police and the city with responsibility for Chaplic's burns and permanent scars, they claim she was forced to endure great emotional strain and mental suffering. The lawsuit also details other instances of municipal liability, including the failure of officers to comply with record-keeping duties and supervisory responsibilities, and the failure of the city to adequately train police officers to prevent the harassment of citizens.

"If the police are abusing our rights, who do we turn to?" queried Baldwin. "Carey was denied her civil rights. She wants to know she can feel safe. We're pursuing this case because, ideally, we'd like to force police departments to handle things appropriately. I think it's reasonable for people to expect cops to deal with detox calls fairly."

Baldwin and Wade also expressed anger at the Police Review and Advisory Board's failure to carry through with an investigation of the case. The Board, empowered last year to independently monitor activities of the Cambridge Police Department, received a complaint from Chaplic in March 1987 about the incident. According to Baldwin, the Board was initially receptive and began a probe. However, Baldwin said the Board hired a private investigator who did an "incredibly horrendous, subjective job," and was subsequently fired. Baldwin said she has not heard from the Board since April 1987.

No one from the Board returned any of GCN's calls. According to Cambridge City Solicitor Higley, the executive director of the Board recently left his position and a replacement is currently being sought.

Said Baldwin, "I give Carey all sorts of credit for having the courage to fight in the first place, and then the civilian board mishandled it. What kind of game is that — there's a review board and then there's not? It's hard enough to fight this thing as it is." □

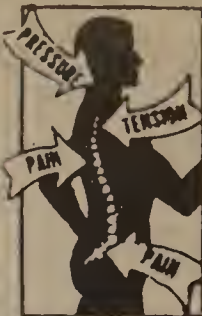
Nuts

Continued from page 10

to thank for the first movie I can think of that deals with incest. Oddly enough, television, which is frequently so linear and uninteresting, is light years ahead of Hollywood when it comes to dealing with hard issues like incest, AIDS and racism. Just turn to any soap opera in the afternoon, or "Cagney and Lacey," or some of the TV specials.

Streisand wrote the music for, produced and starred in *Nuts*. And she directed and starred in *Yentl*. *Yentl* was met with mixed reviews, but it also was the story of a woman who had a mind of her own and who struggled creatively against social norms.

Certainly against the backdrop of movies like *Fatal Attraction* and *The Big Easy*, where strong women are either psychotic or become mush-brained in the grip of sexual attraction, one appreciates the woman-consciousness of Barbra Streisand. And maybe you just have to be larger-than-life to be able to say real things about women in this world. Otherwise, nobody listens. □



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PUBLICATIONS

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A Journal of Irreverent Feminism. Quarterly of commentary, analysis, reviews, cartoons & humor by and for women who agree to disagree—who are still political, but not necessarily correct. Sample \$1; sub \$5; more if/less if. LesCon, 584 Castro, #263G, SF, CA 94114. (16...)

GUARDIAN: Independent radical newsweekly. Covers Gay, women and minority struggles and international progressive movements. Special offer-4 issues FREE. Write Guardian, Dept GCN, 33W 17th St, NY, NY, 10011. (ex)

off our backs

Celebrating 15 years of radical feminist journalism. We bring feminist national/international news analysis and reviews each month. \$11 year, 11 issues. (\$15 for contributing subs) \$20 institutional fee. Sample-\$3 for 3 issues! Write "off our backs" Dept GCN, 1841 Columbia Rd. NW, Room 212 Washington, DC 20009. (ex)

OUTRAGEOUS WOMEN

National journal of woman-to-woman S/M. Diverse feminist quarterly of S/M fact, fiction and photos. \$11/yr. Single issues \$3. Must state you are over 18. SASE for info. PO Box 23, Somerville MA 02143. (ex)

WOMAN OF POWER: "A Magazine of Feminism, Spirituality, and Politics," an inspiring international quarterly publication. Subscriptions \$22 for 4 issues; single issues \$6 plus \$1 postage. P.O. Box 827, Cambridge, MA 02238, telephone (617) 625-7885. (ex)

ON OUR BACKS, the sexual entertainment magazine for lesbians, is 48 pages of erotic fiction, features, plus timely sexual advice and news columns. We are quarterly, national, unique and provocative. \$15/yr sub or \$5 current issue to: On Our Backs, PO Box 421916, San Francisco, CA 94142. (ex)

BLACK/OUT

The new quarterly magazine from the National coalition of Black Lesbians and Gays, features news, views, reviews, poetry, short fiction and announcements of interest to the national Black Lesbian and Gay community. Sample copy, \$4. 1 yr. subscription, (4 issues) \$10. To: Black/Out, NCBLG, P.O. Box 2490, Washington, DC 20013. (ex)

FOR SALE

Lonely Rabbit seeks new owner. Born in 1977. Great body, excellent health. Quite well travelled. Call me up. Take me home. 625-0264. \$600. (26)

ORGANIZATIONS

GAY YOUTH COMMUNITY FUND

Sponsors of youth/student projects send tax-deductable donations payable to:GYCC/Capp St. Foundation. Mail to: GYCF, 2215-R Market St., Suite 479, San Francisco, CA 94114. (15.30)

JEWISH LESBIAN DAUGHTERS OF HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS

We meet for support & networking and welcome contact from other *Jewish Lesbian Daughters of Holocaust Survivors*. The next meeting is scheduled for April 22nd-24th, in upstate New Hampshire, and semi-annually thereafter. A *partners group* has also been formed for lesbian women who are in relationship with JLDHS. Membership is not dependent on both partners. For information, write Box 6194, Boston, MA 02114 or call (617) 321-4254. (15.49)

OLDER LESBIAN ENERGY

Social and support group for women over 40. P.O. Box 1214, East Arlington, MA 02174. (15.48)

DAUGHTERS OF BILITIS

Support organization for lesbians, 1151 Mass Ave. Camb. OCBC. Raps every Tues, Thurs at 8pm. Special raps for 35+, parents, ynger women, baby boomers. Singles, coming out, issues forum. All 8pm. Monthly events, outing club, library. Info: 661-3633. All women invited to participate. (15.35)

Prisoners Seeking Friends



TO ALL THOSE, IN & OUT OF PRISON, WHO FIGHT AGAINST THEIR BONDAGE.
Alexander Berkman, — Prison Memoirs of an Anarchist

I have plans to start a new club entitled 'Behind Obstacles Yourselves Segregated (BOYS). It'll be to help obtain legal help for homo and bisexuals imprisoned & caught making love & had a new charge brought against them as well as other homosexual discriminations behind bars. When everything comes together I'll send you explicit details. Meanwhile a small mention with my address for letters of inquiry would be most helpful. James "Blondie" MANESS, 112415 Beaver III, PO Box 174, St. Gabriel LA 70776.

Problems of love, sex, friendship, employment? Need help and want advice? Send a SASE to get a most honest and sincere immediate reply to: Darrell SHOPBELL, 43197, Box 900, Jefferson City MO 65102. [Note to Prisoners: You might want to check to see if you can get mail from other prisoners before taking advantage of this offer.]

I used to get your paper several years ago but then they started hasseling me about it. Now I've been transferred to 'protection' because I've contracted the AIDS virus. I'm dealing with it (or for the most part) and I don't plan on giving in to it. However, I would like to start getting GCN again. This unit has a lot of us with the virus in it and it helps to read magazines that have real info in them. Also from the penpal listing I have met three wonderful people that have been writing to me for well over three years. I'm hoping to find another penpal that's HIV positive like myself. Paul SHIELDS, 361572, Rt 4 Box 1200, Rosharon TX 77583.

I have been in prison now for 7 years and in that time your paper has been a big help to me. I'll be getting out before long and would like to find some friendship and T.L.C. Looking for Mr. Right. Robert SCOTT, 624655, Box 138, Medical Lake WA 99022.

Seeking correspondence with any bisexual males for females from the outside. Race & age unimportant. I'm very lonely. Darren COMBS, K-7577, Drawer K, Dallas PA 18612.

Looking for gay penpals. I'm a Big Man, 6'3", 260 lbs. Ken Stewart, Box B-45492, Florence AZ 85232.

34 yrs, thinning brn hair, lots of thick cock hair, hot red lips, pass and agr, Fr and Gr, supporter of NAMBLA, love to hear from Lat. Americans, Native Americans, Asians, TV-TSs. Will answer all who send EMBOSED (!) SASE. I'm into art, history, law, outdoors and many other things. Tommy M. BLANKENSHIP, 195152, Box 45699, Lucasville OH 45699.

Hot, well-built top man due to be released soon, searching for feminine bottom man who wants a relationship. Your photo will get mine. Arlie James DAVILA, 1300 Western Blvd, Raleigh NC 27606.

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Clean-cut guy, youthful 48, healthy, good body & good mind, welcomes recently released guys as guests & comrades. Quiet country house. Short or long term haven. Write: Thomas Scott, Drawer 303, Hanover NH 03755.

ORGANIZATIONS

BLACK AND WHITE MEN TOGETHER

Multiracial group for all people. Call (415) 431-1976 or write BWMT, suite 140, 580 Castro St. SF, CA, 94114. (16.1)

BOSTON ALLIANCE OF GAY AND LESBIAN YOUTH

Social support group for youth 22 and under. Wed, night general meeting from 7:30-9pm. New persons meeting at 6:00. Women's meeting at 6:45. Call 482-7858 for info. (15.32)

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Interested in joining a new network of seven sister lesbian alumnae for fun and informal social activities? If so, call Holly at 964-0767. Confidentiality rigorously respected. (38)

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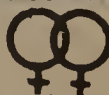
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I'm serving time in the Cal. Rehab. Center for Women. I'd like a penpal. I'm fem and fun loving, Black and beautiful and would like to hear from my sisters inside and out. Princess ROBINSON, W25559 (408-08F), Box 1800, Norco CA 91760.

I would like to write other women that I could share my thoughts and feelings with. I'm 31, like all outdoors activities, reading, working crossword puzzles, and knitting. I'd rather write to women on the outside if possible, who can help me keep up with what's going on out there (really). Roxanne JETER, 340314, Rt 4 Box 800, Gatesville TX 76528.

I am a black gay female. I'm interested in meeting other women in the free world. I'm 21, and very outgoing and love all types of sports. Very intelligent. Looking for a woman to pamper and spoil. Karen KINCAID, 23845, Box 7007, Carson City NV 89702.

I'm a 32 yr old gay woman who would like a penpal. I'm very understanding and hopeful for a new friendship. Please write. Nancy Jo HUNT, N5660 (401-16B), Box 1800, Norco CA 91760.

CHEERS TO THE GAYS!

Woman and man that are not GAY people need to keep their nose out of GAY peoples lifestyle and take care of their own lifestyle. GAY people live each day to eat, sleep, laugh, play and share love and make love. All human beings on the face of the earth do that. I say as a masculine butch, homosexual female it's in my bones to share romance with a woman. Also could you send me any free GAY paper you have. I don't care how old it is. I like reading about GAY people. Thanks again! Ruby JOHNSON, F02516, PO Box 8540, Pembroke Pines, FL 33024.

LesCon (a journal of irreverent feminism) is available for free to WOMEN in prison. LesCon, 584 Castro St, San Francisco, CA 94114.

Thank you for your magazines. They help me to learn and grow. Being gay is nothing new in my family. My sister got married to another woman and they are very happy. We talk all the time. I also have a cousin who's gay. I'm in isolation to protect myself from attacks because I'm young and kind of pretty. I'm also very concerned about AIDS and need to learn more. If you know of anyone who'd like to correspond or maybe visit. Richard MAGUB, Box B-51576, Florence AZ 85232.

I hope to go to a Jr college to become an LPN nurse. I like reading, and going jogging. I love to read anything on medical profession. I like to work with sick people an be as helpful as I can. The pay is not great but the feeling of being wanted and needed is. Thank you for writing. Joseph JONES, PO Box 5678, Tallahassee FL 32314.

My hobbies are working out with weights, all kinds of music and the outdoors, especially the beach. Would like to write a friend. Ricky David WILLSTEIN, 10259-FL, Rt 1 Box 36, Jackson NC 27845.



Looking for for-real CROSSDRESSERS, and gay men who dress, act and look the part as a Lady, in public ect. Tall long slender legs is what I'm looking for, someone to be my friend and lover when I'm released from this prison. I may be in prison but I too need love and understanding. James CANNON, Box 129759, (C-2-18/1), Reidsville GA 30499.

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calendar

16 SATURDAY TO
25 MONDAY

22 Friday ☐ Celebrate the 15th anniversary of legal abortion with Casselberry-Dupree, Toshi Reagon and Annette Aguilar. Strand Theater, Dorchester. 8pm. \$5-\$25/more if, less if. Info: 782-1056.

16 Saturday

Boston ☐ **"The People and a King,"** a dramatic tribute to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., produced and directed by Vernon Blackman. Boston Public Library, 666 Boylston St. 4-6pm. Free.

Boston ☐ **Holy union ceremony,** lesbian/gay wedding ceremony for all interested. Church of the Covenant, Newbury St., 3pm. Reception following at Ritz Carlton.

Jamaica Plain ☐ Peacock Coffeehouse and Jamaica Plain Arts Council present **Do'a World Music Ensemble.** Multicultural Arts Center, 659 Centre St. 8pm. \$10. Info: 522-2812.

Allston ☐ **Double Edge Theatre** and the Women in Theatre Festival present Czech artist Alena Ambrova as part of the Electra Festival of experimental solo performance. Double Edge Theatre, 5 St. Luke's Rd. 8pm. Call 254-4228 for info or other performances, workshops, tickets.

Jamaica Plain ☐ **The Lunch,** a new play by Michelle Gabow, directed by Kristina Johnson, a difficult humorous, and loving dialogue between a Jewish mother and daughter at Eliot Hall, 7 Eliot St. (Also 1/17, 22-24) \$7. 8pm. Info: 522-7377.

Boston ☐ **"Coping with the Concerns and Problems of Older Gay Men."** Monthly meeting of Prime Timers, Revere Rm. Lindemann Health Ctr., 25 Staniford St. All older gay men invited. 2-4pm. Info: write Box 352, Reading, MA 01867.

Northampton ☐ **Shelix, lesbian S/M support group** discussion of "Physical and Sexual Safety in Lesbian S/M." A presentation by Bet Power. New women welcome. Call (413) 584-7616 for location or send SASE to Shelix, Box 416, Florence Station, Northampton, MA 01060.

17 Sunday

Boston ☐ **"The People and a King,"** dramatic tribute to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Boston Public Library. 4-6pm. Free. (See Saturday 1/16 listing.)



Cambridge ☐ Sixth annual **"Journey Into a Dream"**, a musical tribute to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. \$8, \$4 students/elders. Fitzgerald Theatre, Camb. Ring & Latin School, 459 Broadway. 7pm.

Allston ☐ Alaknanda Samarth of India, Kei Takei of Japan and Uttara Asha Coorwala of India present an evening of dance at the **Electra Festival.** (For more info see Saturday 1/16 listing.)

Cambridge ☐ **Women's International Support Network** brunch at Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St. All newcomers welcome. 12 noon. Info: 426-9371.

Boston ☐ A meeting of the **Ionian Society**, a group for lesbian and gay people of Greek heritage. For more info call 625-3172 or 894-8363.

19 Tuesday

Cambridge ☐ Discussion group in ASL for **deaf women with incest histories**, sponsored by Incest Resources, Inc. Open only to deaf women with incest histories. The Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St. 7:30-9:30pm. Free. Info: 354-8807 (voice/TDD).

Boston ☐ **Confront the Duke at the State House!** Due to the State of the State Address, the Action originally planned for 4:45pm at 43 Chauncy St. (Duke's Prez Campaign H.Q.) will now be held at the State House. Meet behind the State House at 6:00pm. Organized by the "Duke and AIDS" Committee of MASS ACT OUT. Info: 661-7737.

20 Wednesday

Boston ☐ Orientation meeting for volunteers interested in working on the **Project Place hotline**, a crisis intervention, info/referrals hotline. 6:30pm. Call 262-3740 for more info.

Cambridge ☐ Feminists discuss the **15th anniversary of Roe v. Wade**, the Supreme Court decision legalizing abortion. Court nominee Kennedy, local/national abortion clinic strategies and ongoing abortion rights battles for teens also discussed. "Say it Sister!" WMBR 88.1FM.. 7-8pm.

21 Thursday

Cambridge ☐ Drop-in discussion for **women with incest histories**, sponsored by Incest Resources, Inc. Open only to women with incest histories. The Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St. 7:30-9:30pm. Free. Info: 354-8807 (voice/TDD).

Boston ☐ **GCN's production night.** All welcome. Proofreading: before 8PM. Paste-up: after 7PM. 62 Berkeley St., near Arlington & Back Bay T-stops. GCN: 426-4469.

Allston ☐ **Marilyn Arsem** performs in Electra festival. (See Saturday 1/16 listing for complete info.)

22 Friday

Boston ☐ **GCN mailing.** Come help stuff the paper and meet new friends. 5pm to 10pm. Near Arlington and Back Bay T-stops. Info: GCN, 426-4469.

Dorchester ☐ An evening of music to celebrate the 15th anniversary of legal abortion with **Casselberry-Dupree, Toshi Reagon and Annette Aguilar.** Sponsored by The Committee for Reproductive Freedom. Strand Theater, 543 Columbia Rd., 8pm. ASL interpreted, wheelchair accessible. Childcare by advance request. Suggested donation \$5/\$10/\$25. Info: 782-1056.

Somerville ☐ World premiere of **"Two in Twenty,"** a lesbian soap opera on video, at the Somerville Theatre, Davis Square. 8pm, doors open at 7. (Episodes 1-3 Friday; 4 and 5 Saturday). Wheelchair accessible except bathrooms. Open captioned for the hearing impaired, with ASL-interpreted announcements. \$10 per evening, or \$16 for both nights if purchased in advance. \$12 each night at door. Info: 625-1081; 254-3107 (TTY).

23 Saturday

North Dartmouth ☐ **"Bargaining for childcare,"** a conference on successful union strategies to gain employer-supported childcare benefits. Visual and Performing Arts Bldg. SMU. 8:30am-3:30pm. \$15 (includes lunch). Info: Labor Education Center, 999-8007.

Cambridge ☐ **"Animal Rights/Feminism; Making Connections."** Connie Salamone presents slide show/discussion of the oppression of animals, women, indigenous peoples, the earth. Sponsored by ANIMA. 186 Hampshire St. (basement). 8pm. Free.

Brookline ☐ Join Am Tikva for **"Shabbat Study."** Learn and have fun at the same time. 10am. Call 782-8894 for location.

24 Sunday

Watertown ☐ **GLOW: Gays and Lesbians of Watertown** and surrounding communities monthly potluck. Newcomers invited. 7pm. Info: Chuck 926-5985 or Chelle 489-2519.

Boston ☐ **"Boston's Other Voice"** presents Steven Levine and Kriss Renn of the Freedom Trail Band. WROR 98.5FM. 12:30am (Monday morning).

25 Monday

Boston ☐ **An Introduction to Boston** for lesbians and gay men, a 3-hour class led by Gordon Gottlieb and Rhea Becker. Sign up by 1/22. \$25. Info: Boston Center for Adult Education, 267-4430.

National Calendar

January 17 ☐ **New York** ☐ **"We Want More People of Color in our Organization — How Do We Go About It?"** A workshop for the white lesbian and gay male community sponsored by Men of All Colors Together-NY. At the Lesbian and Gay Community Services Center. 10am-5pm. Free. To register, leave your name and number at (212) 245-6366. The workshop will be followed by "New Love Song," a performance piece by Assotto Saint at 7:30pm. \$5.

CALENDAR COMPILED BY
TODD HOLLISTER

It's the post-New Year's meeting of CUEER (Committee United to Eradicate Exclusive Relationships) and the room is packed to the rafters. (Meetings at this time of the year are always especially well-attended as we collect the fall-out from unrealized New Year's Eve expectations.) I'm supposed to be taking minutes, but instead I'm staring lustfully at Sheila. I never dreamed she would join....

* * *

It all started rather innocently at the All Veggie Womyn's New Year's Eve Masked Ball, held in the basement of the local food co-op. Women appeared in all their finery, festooned in marvelous costumes and wearing spectacular masks.

Marci and Sheila Smyth-Holstein (they'd fused their last names sometime early in the course of their five-year relationship) were among the first to arrive, dressed in patchworks of silk as Piorette and Piorette — a lesbian version of the French white-faced couple. They'd worked for weeks on the costumes, gathering scraps of fabric anywhere they were to be had. It seemed totally consistent for them to be dressed alike, as they were rarely seen separately, and in recent years had even begun to resemble each other.

The room gradually filled with women in a wondrous array of textures and colors. Feather Feinstein, true to her name, came as a peacock in full display. A strict vegetarian who had helped to organize the Ball, Feather would never think of eating a bird, but didn't hesitate to pluck them bald in order to make a fashion statement. She did, however, get some flack for dressing as a male member of the species. Feather attended with her significant other, Tanya Wombmoon. Since no one was ever sure how to pronounce Tanya's last name, most folks called her "TW." She was dressed in green tights and boots, with lots of leafy vegetation and tree branches protruding hither and yon. After rising in righteous indignation at being accused of coming as the "Jolly Green Giant," she explained her concept of the cultural and spiritual link between Mary Martin as Peter Pan, and the wood nymphs of ancient legends — she'd been reading a lot of Judy Grahn lately. By this time, most

The New Year's Eve costume ball massacre

By Nancy De Luca



women had lost interest in the explanation, but they did make mental notes to avoid Tanya on the dance floor.

No party would be complete without an appearance by Leslie Miller and her lover, Sharon Piedmont. New to town, they'd taken the community by storm with the lavish and outrageous dinner parties they hosted. Leslie, who was an advertising executive, told friends she would be coming as a product with which most women were intimately familiar. Everyone was shocked when she strolled in wearing a thick white terrycloth robe, and a hairpiece constructed of wads of absorbent cotton. We couldn't figure out why she had chosen to dress as a rather cylindrical version of Moses or a short, stubby cigarette. Then, the true nature of her inspiration became apparent — the belt which kept her robe together was in fact a long pink string which trailed behind her. For those who couldn't grasp the subtlety of the outfit, Leslie provided instructions on the back of the robe: "Gently pull cord to remove tampon."

Not to be outdone, Sharon dressed as the ultimate kitchen aid in the high-tech vegetarian household: a Cuisinart complete with attachments. She had her dicer, slicer, shredder and grater disks hung from a band around her middle, a well-constructed food chute on top (with holes cut so she could see where she was headed), and, in stylistic harmony with her companion, an oversized electric cord with plug trailing behind her.

The evening was progressing fairly smoothly, with music provided by Sallie Dykstra's All-American Girl Rock & Soul Orchestra. When the band struck up their rendition of "I Heard it Through the Grapevine," the women went wild, winding their way around the floor in a line dance reminiscent of the animated dancing "raisinettes."

Right before midnight, Leslie went off in a corner to chat with Marci. As Sharon was watching from the dance floor, admiring her lover Leslie, she noticed that one of the swatches of Marci's costume was her favorite black floral-patterned blouse. The

blouse had been missing for a couple weeks since she'd loaned it to Leslie. Leslie had gone off to the gym that night after work, and had returned home wearing sweats, claiming she left the blouse in her locker. Sharon peered through her eyeholes with a new-found awareness. The intimacy between the two chatting women was now so obvious. As she approached them, her dicer on the ready, Leslie admitted all; in fact, Sharon's wardrobe was scattered all over town. None of this went unnoticed by Sheila, Marci's lover. However, instead of venting wrath at her look-alike's transgressions, she seemed relieved. Not only had she been carrying on with Feather, but she was looking into a few other nests as well. Tanya, who was dancing with a friend dressed as a loofa (or was it shredded wheat — everyone was too polite to ask), got wind of what was going on, and confronted Feather.

The clock struck midnight and the New Year rang in to the sounds of rending and ripping. While Tanya began ruffling Feather's outfit, Sharon went after what was left of her favorite blouse. Ever sensitive to her audience, Sallie Dykstra, who had moments before struck up the band in her disco arrangement of "Auld Land Syne," smoothly segued into a '60s medley of "It's My Party (and I'll Cry if I Want To)" and "Breaking Up is Hard to Do." The usually gentle and easy-going women were quickly subdued by the multitude of friends present, and households were temporarily rearranged until the dust, feathers, twigs and tufts of cotton settled.

* * *

Now, gazing at Sheila Holstein (or is it Smyth?) across the table at the CUEER meeting, I realize just how productive sor-did episodes can be. I've been attracted to Sheila for years, ever since we organized the bowlathon for Barbelle's, the women's gym Leslie used as her alibi. I wonder...I'm the coordinator for CUEER's Valentine's Day festivities...should I ask Sheila for input? Would it be considered tacky to make a move so soon after a public debacle?

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